

Investi GATORS

Braver and Boulder



New York Times-Bestselling Author
John Patrick Green

Investi GATORS

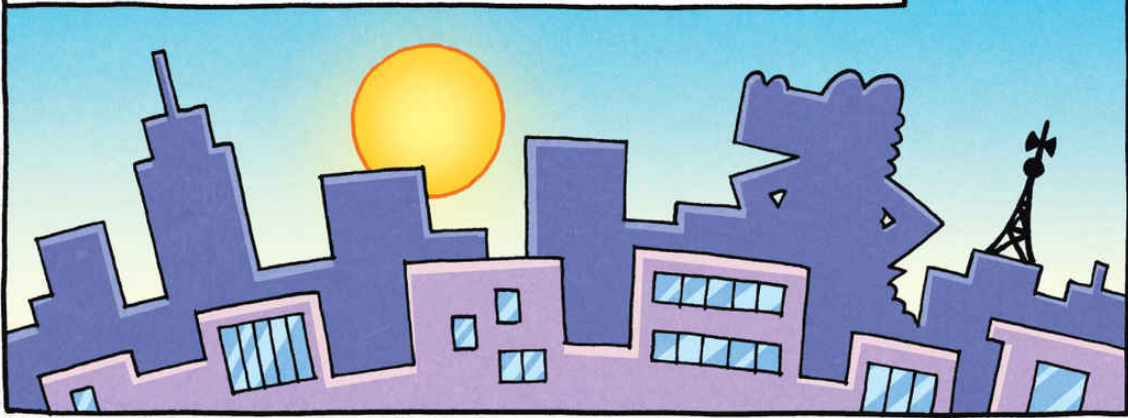
Braver and Boulder

:01
First Second



Chapter 1

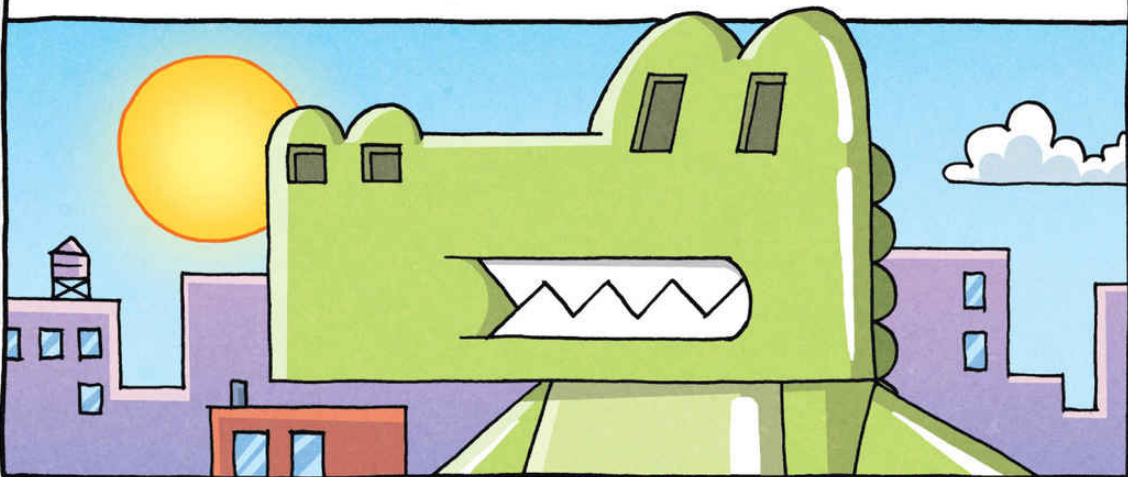
Another peaceful day in the city! Crime has crawled under the rocks from whence it came...



...cowering in fear of the **robot reptile** that saved our fine city from total destruction.



And now this great green guardian is home to the...

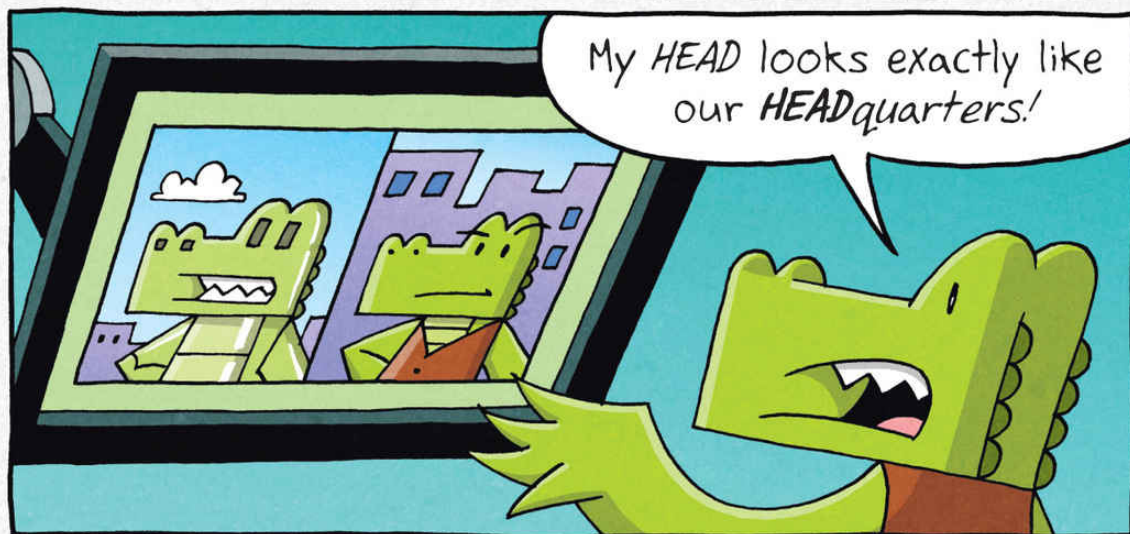


INVESTIGATOR!

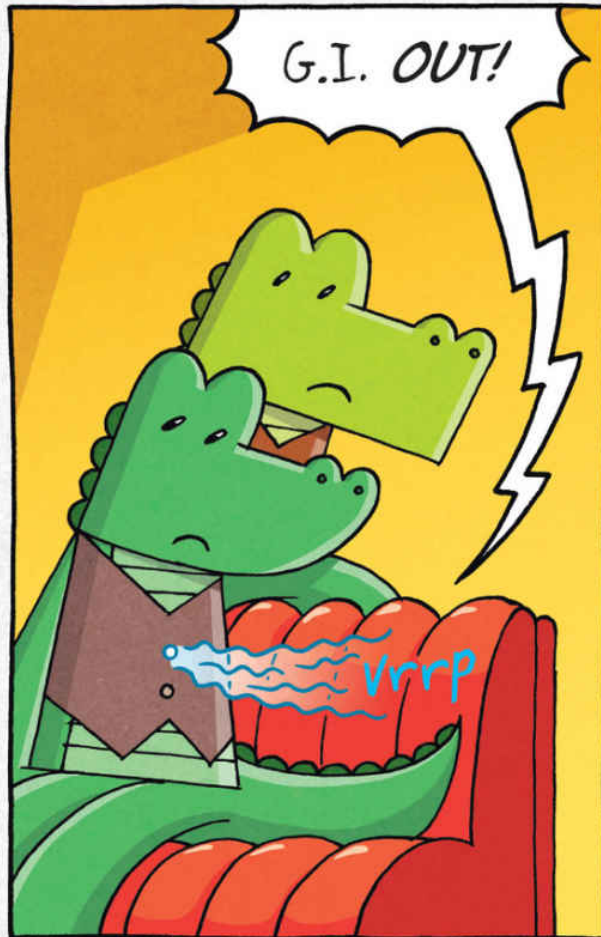
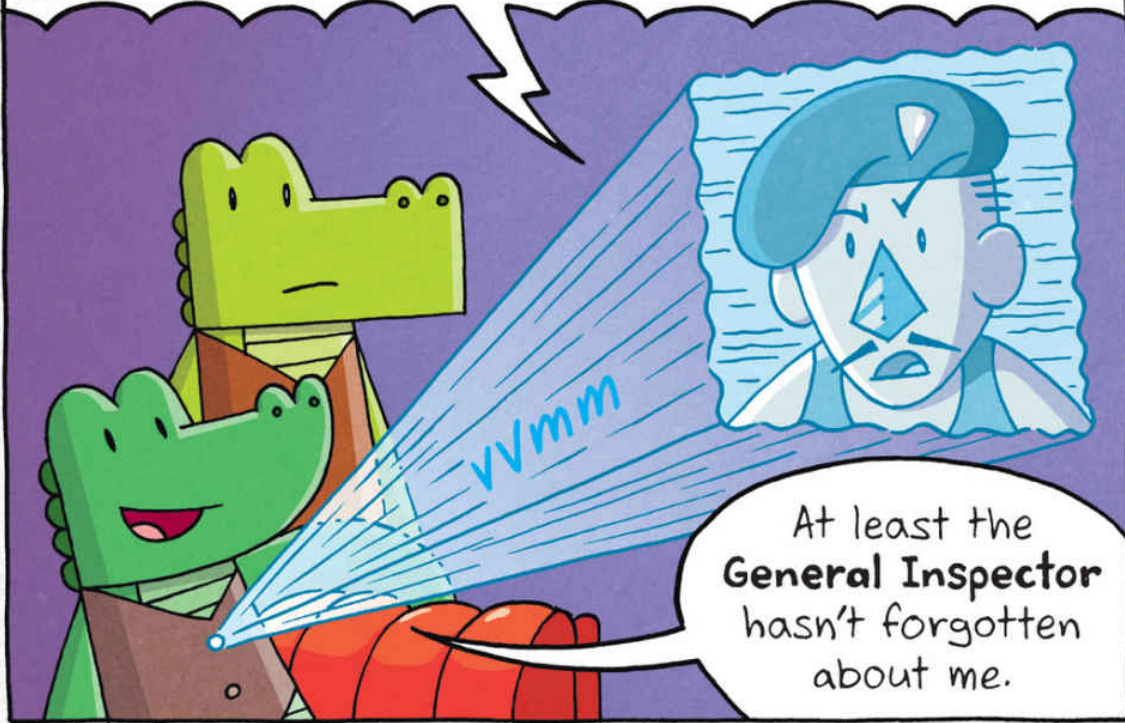


ACTION NEWS NOW — CICI BORINGSTORIES — ACTION NEWS

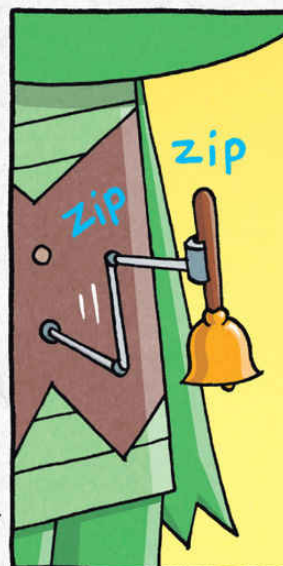
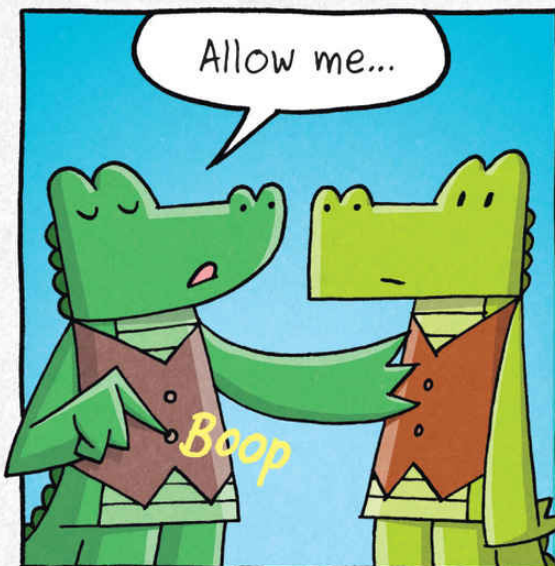
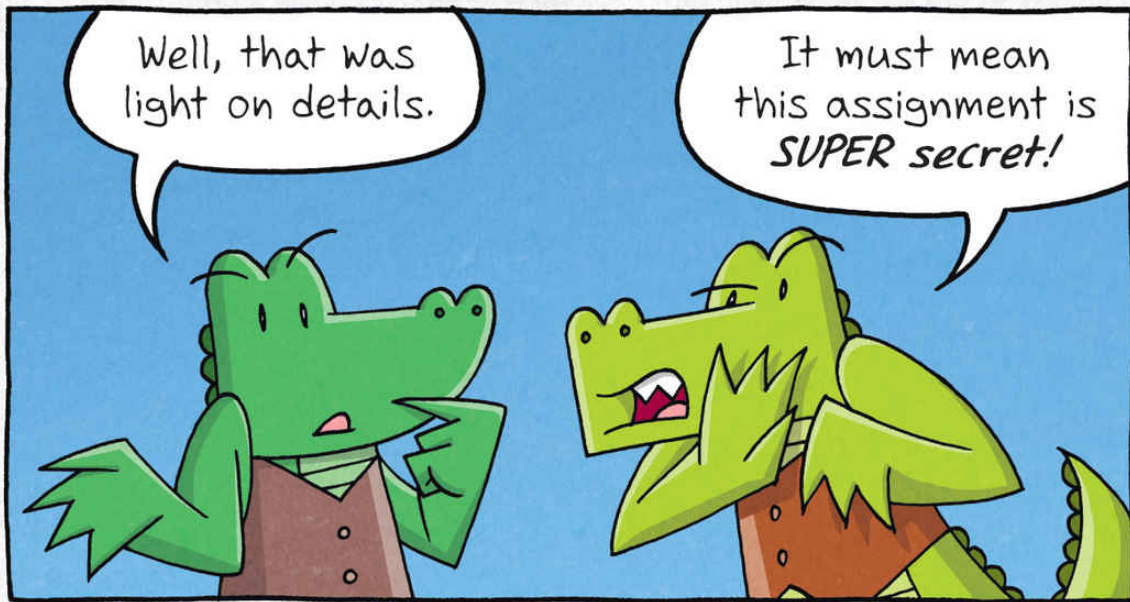




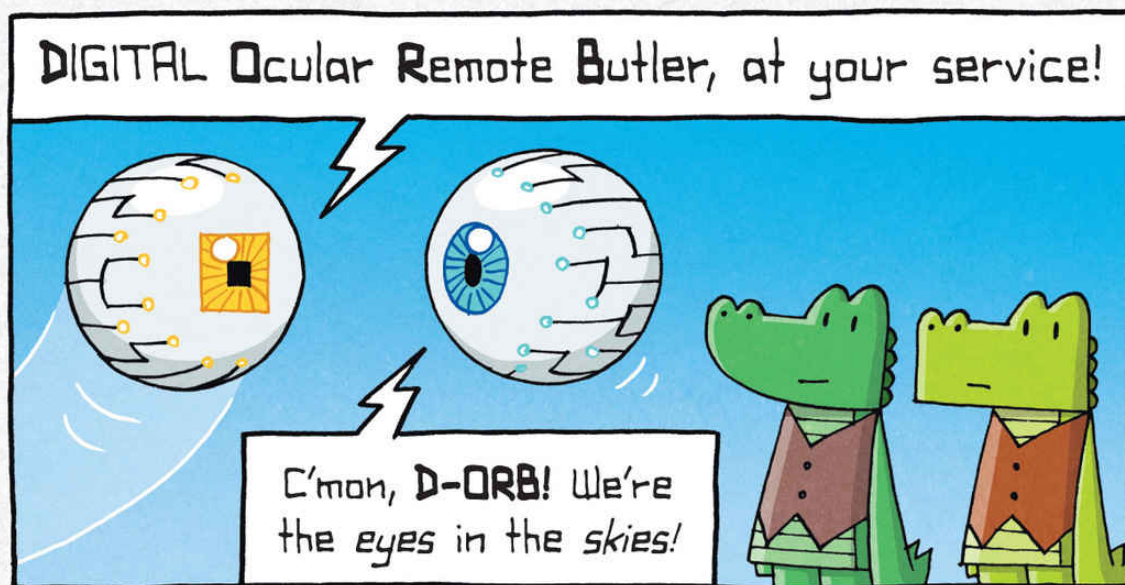
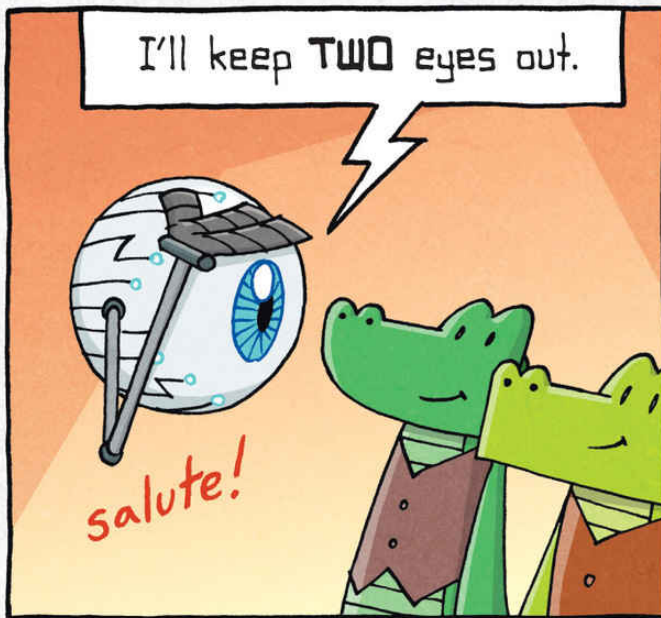
INVESTIGATORS!

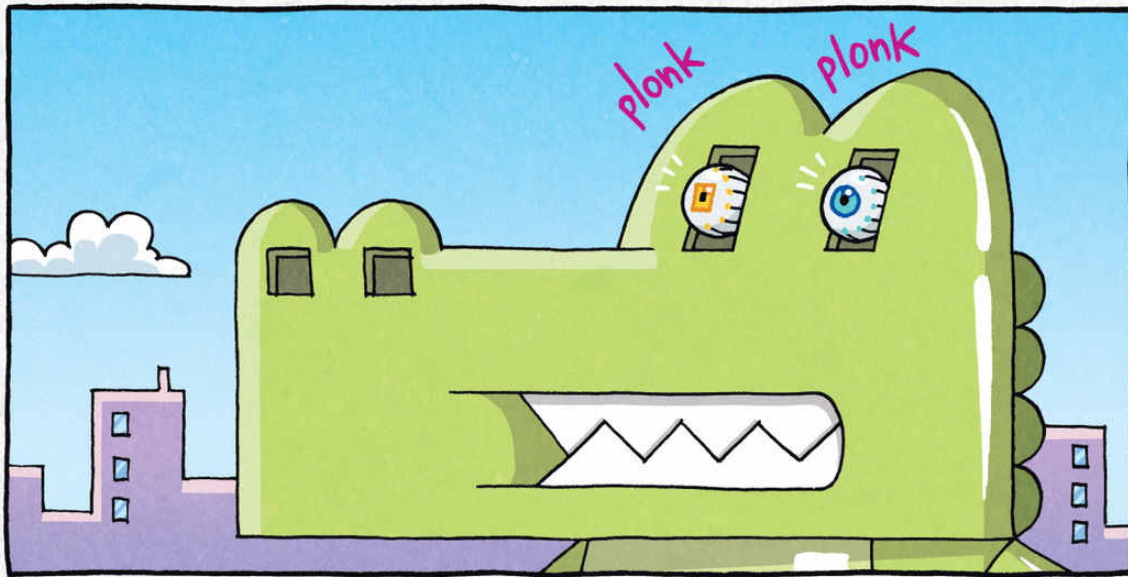
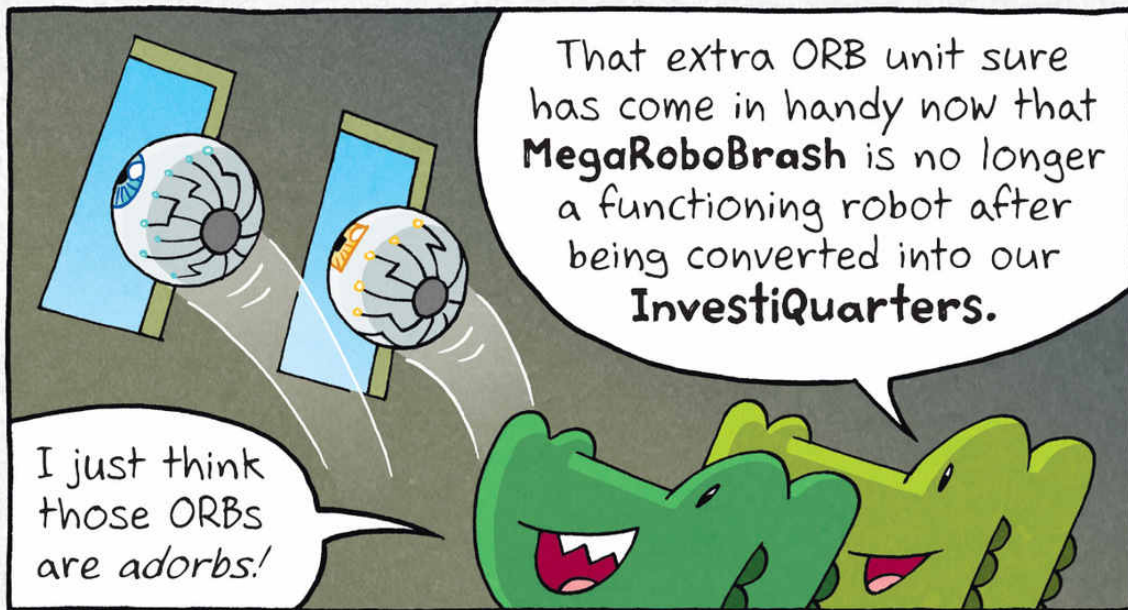


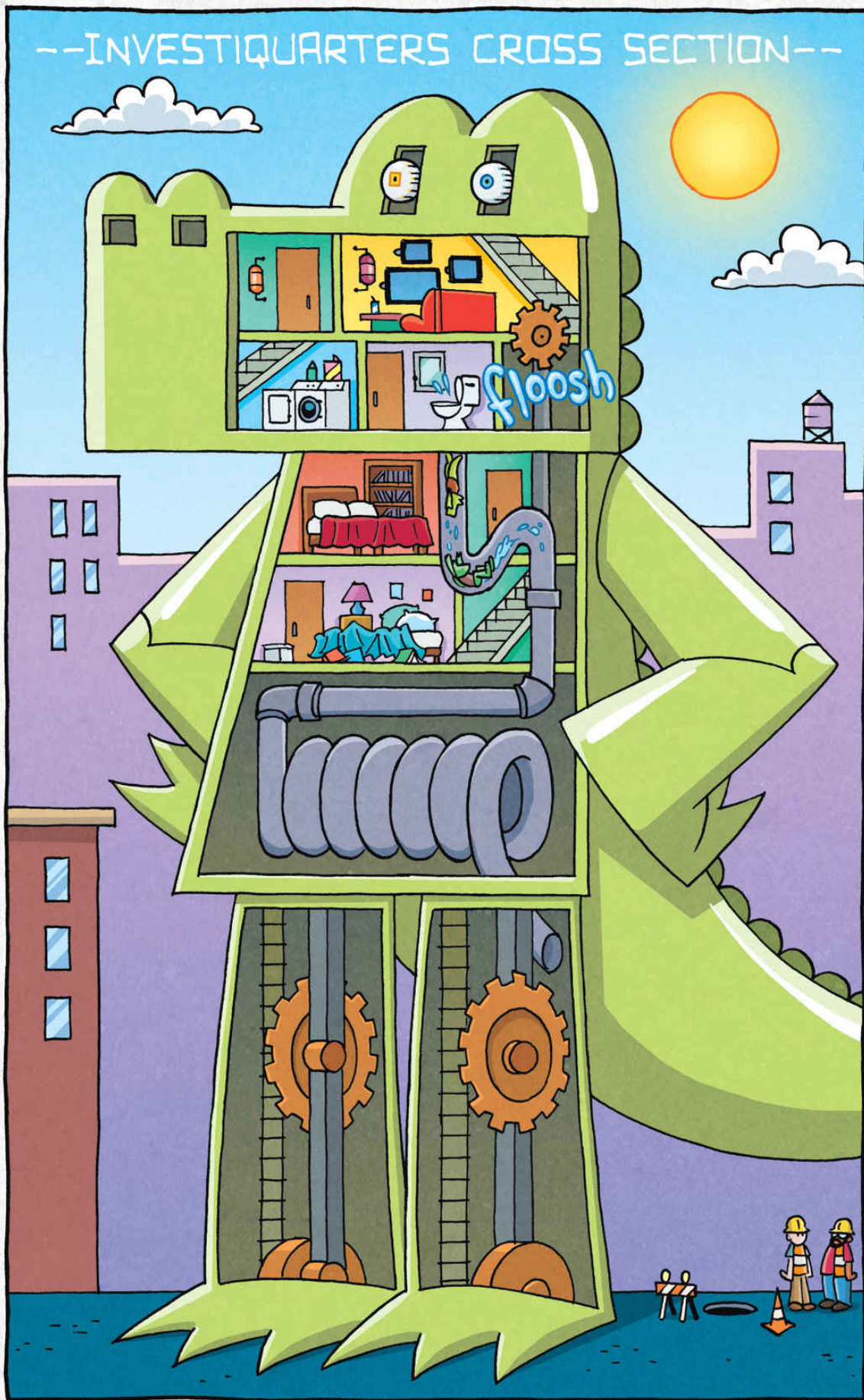
*Special Undercover Investigation Teams



*Computerized Ocular Remote Butler



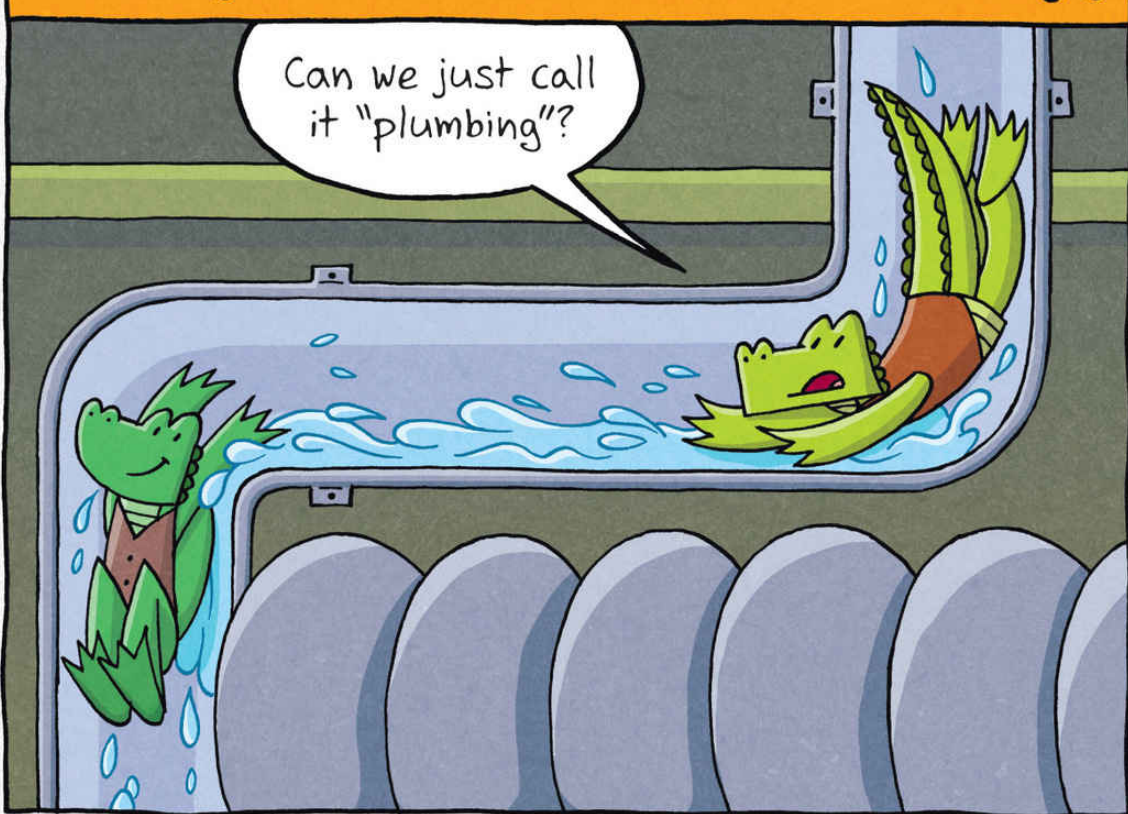




♪ InvestiQuarters is a word with six vowels! ♪



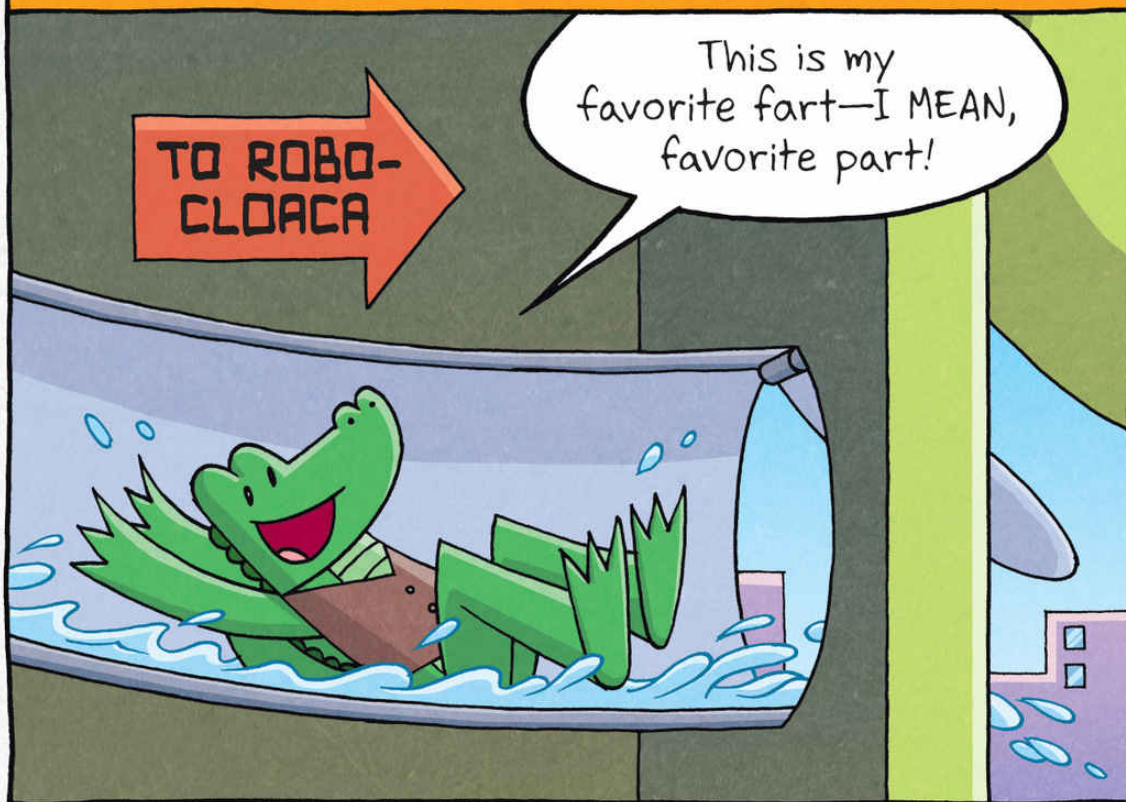
♪ Mango and Brash are in its robotic bowels! ♪

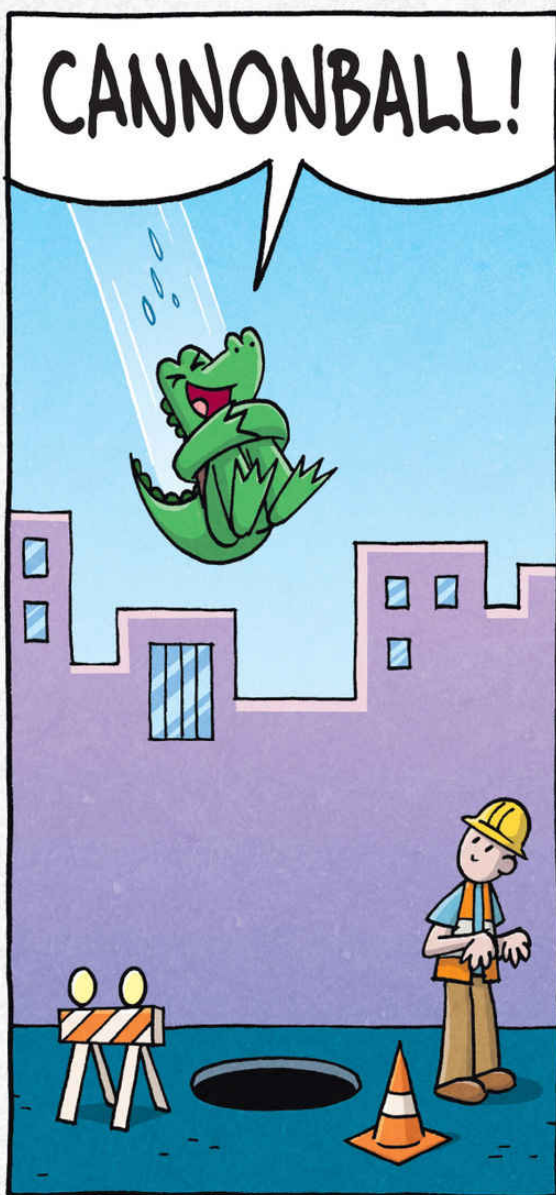
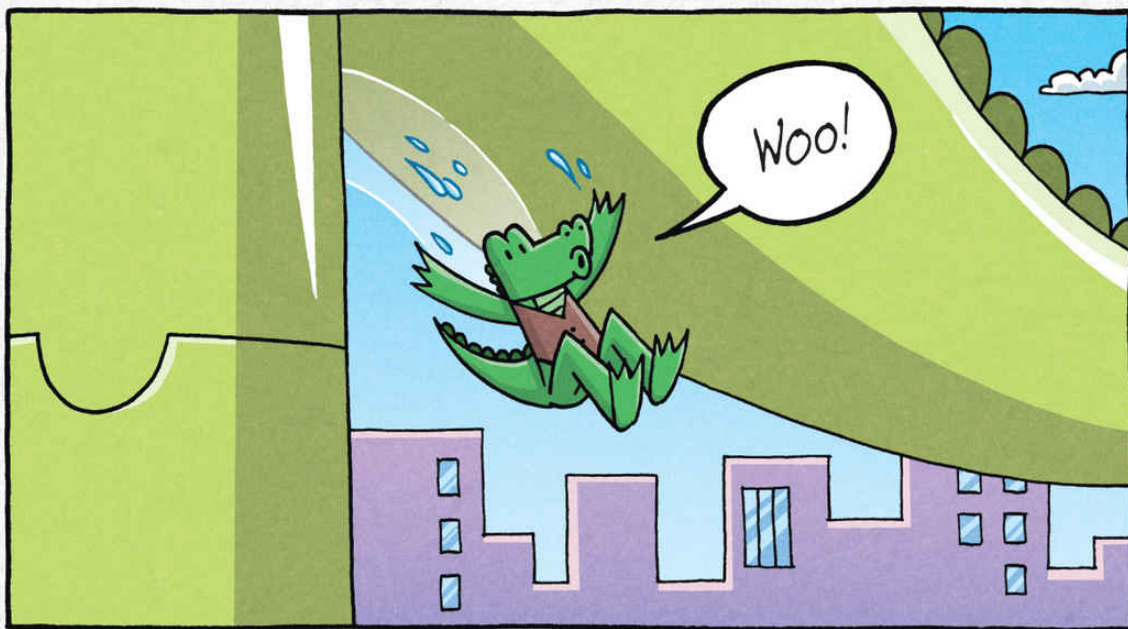


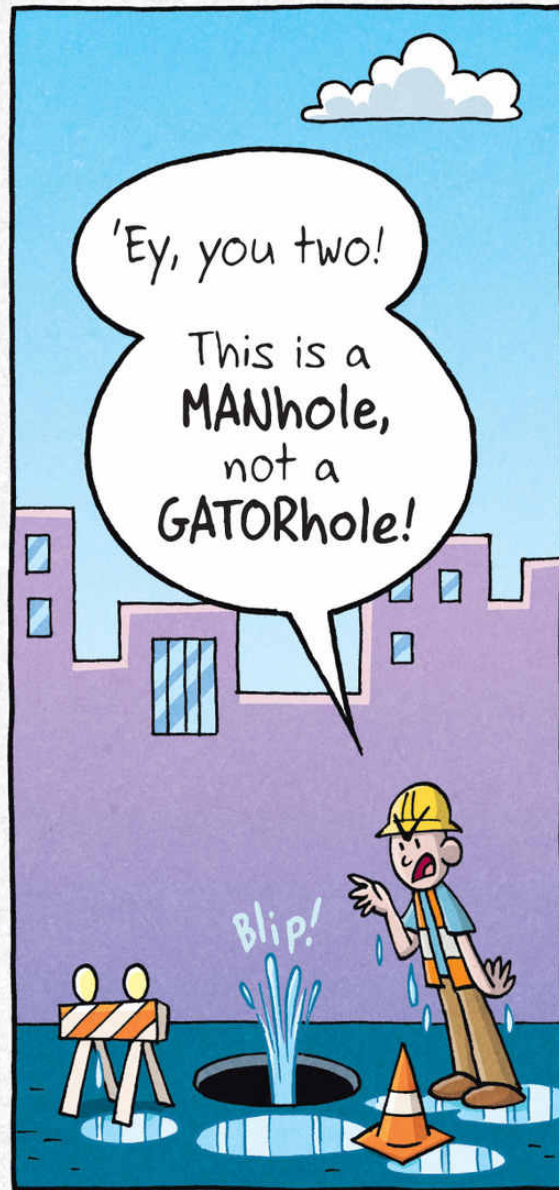
♪ ♪ Gettin' to the sewer is what it's about! ♪ ♪



♪ Even if it seems gross, the way they come out! ♪ ♪





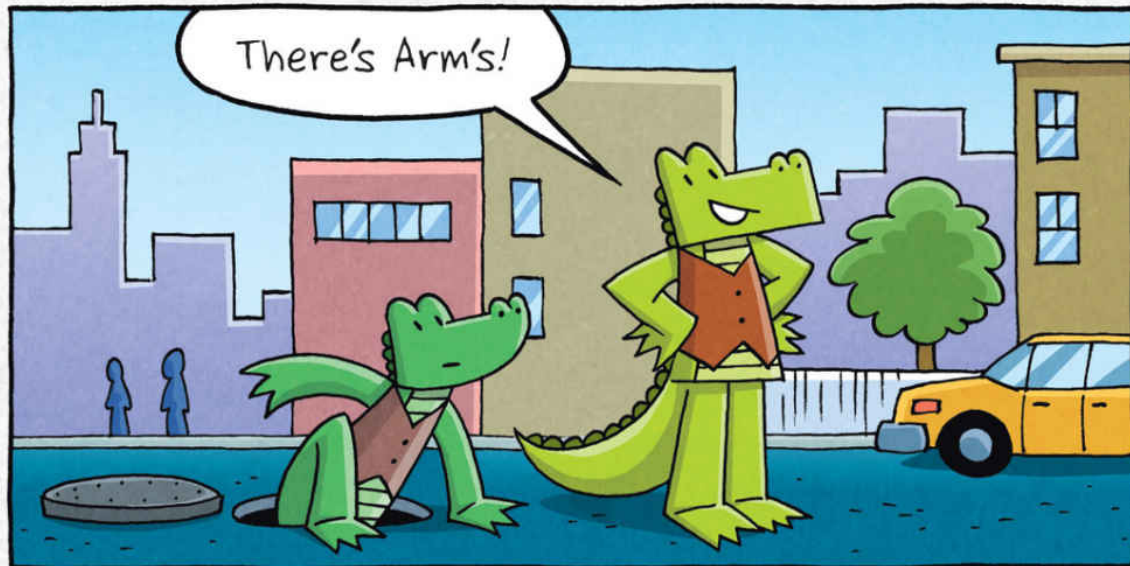
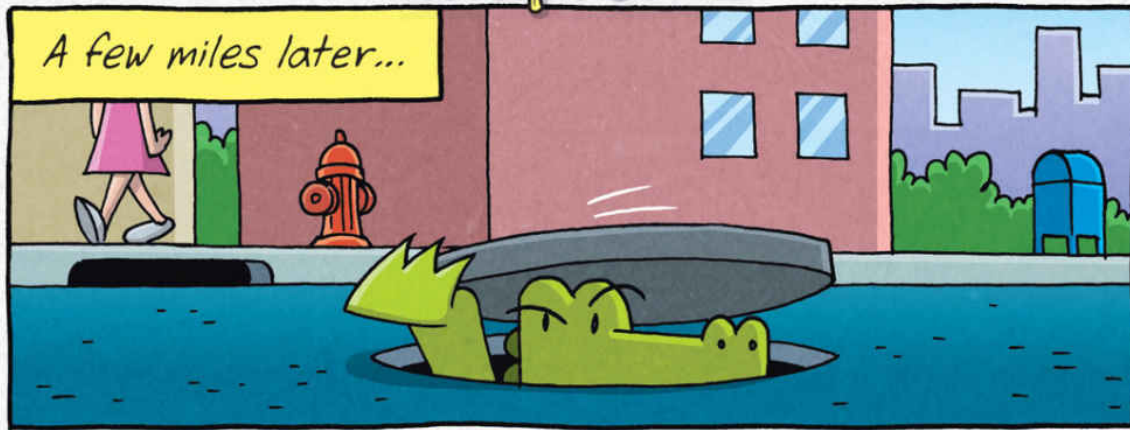


'Ey, you two!

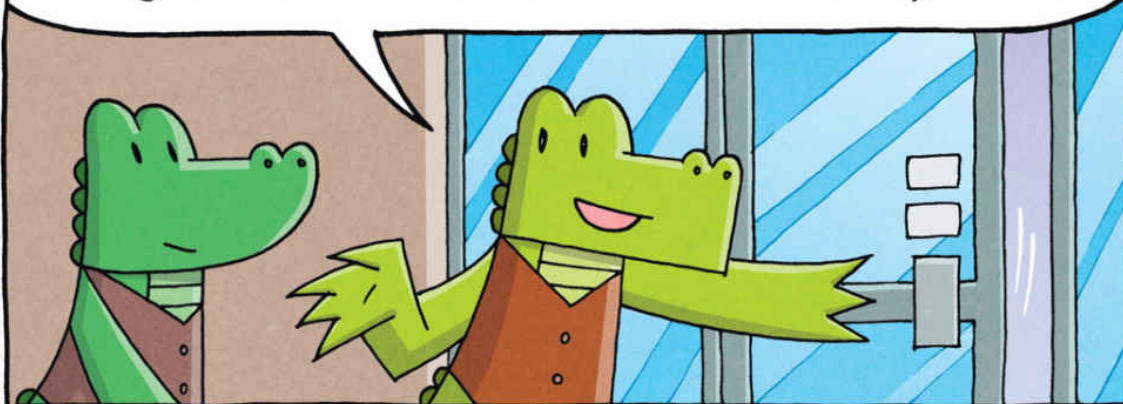
This is a
MANhole,
not a
GATORhole!

Blip!

Chapter 2

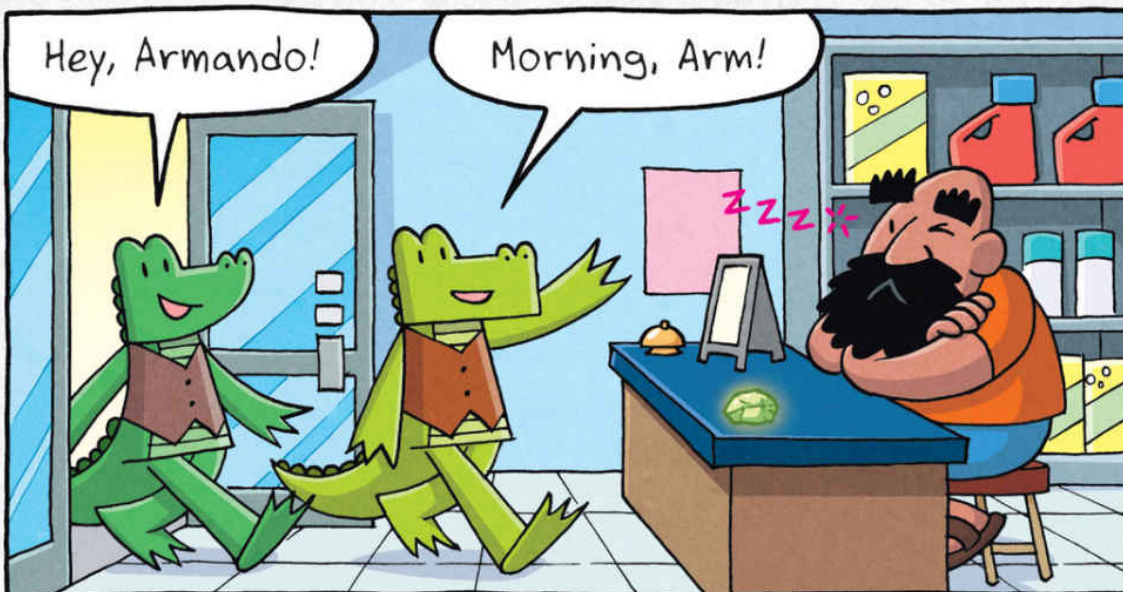


Armando's is of course the Apparel Research and Manufacturing *SUBSTITUTE*, while the real A.R.M.S. is being rebuilt with the rest of S.U.I.T. headquarters.

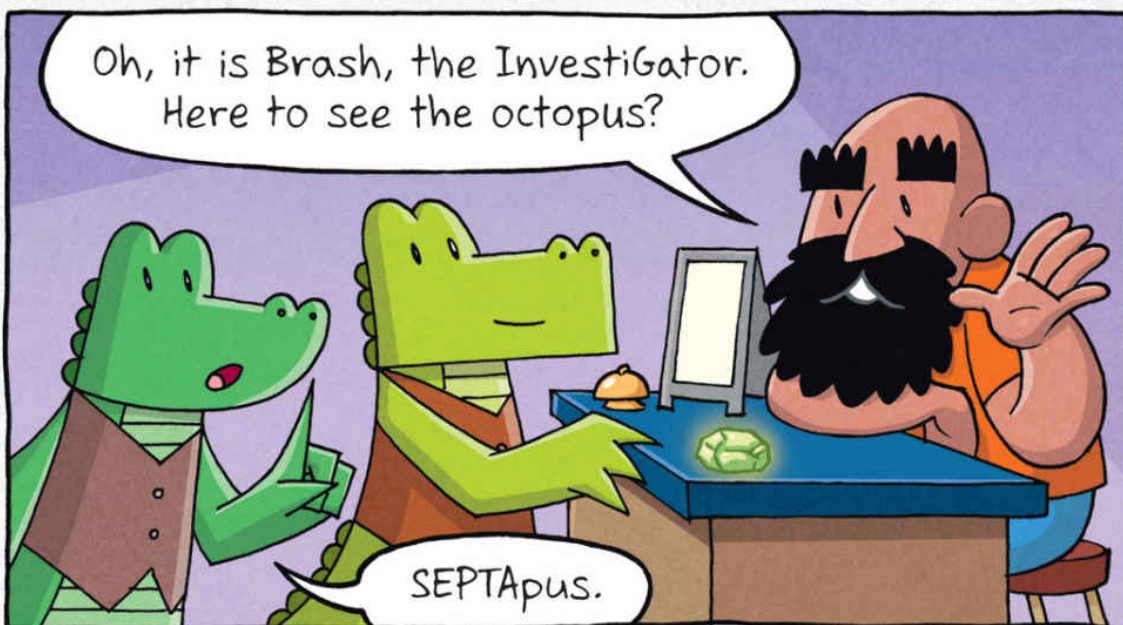


Hey, Armando!

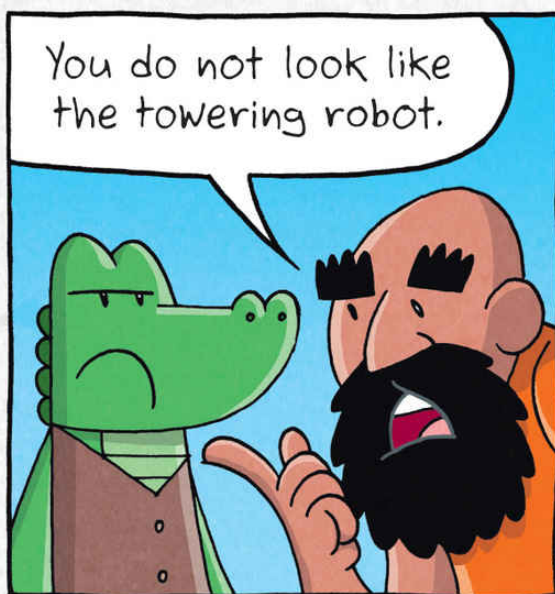
Morning, Arm!

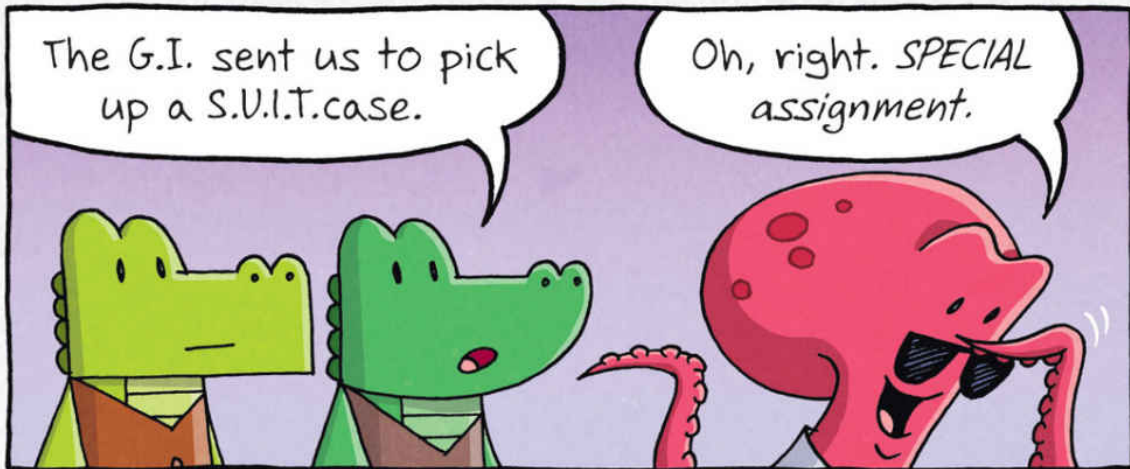


Oh, it is Brash, the InvestiGator.
Here to see the octopus?

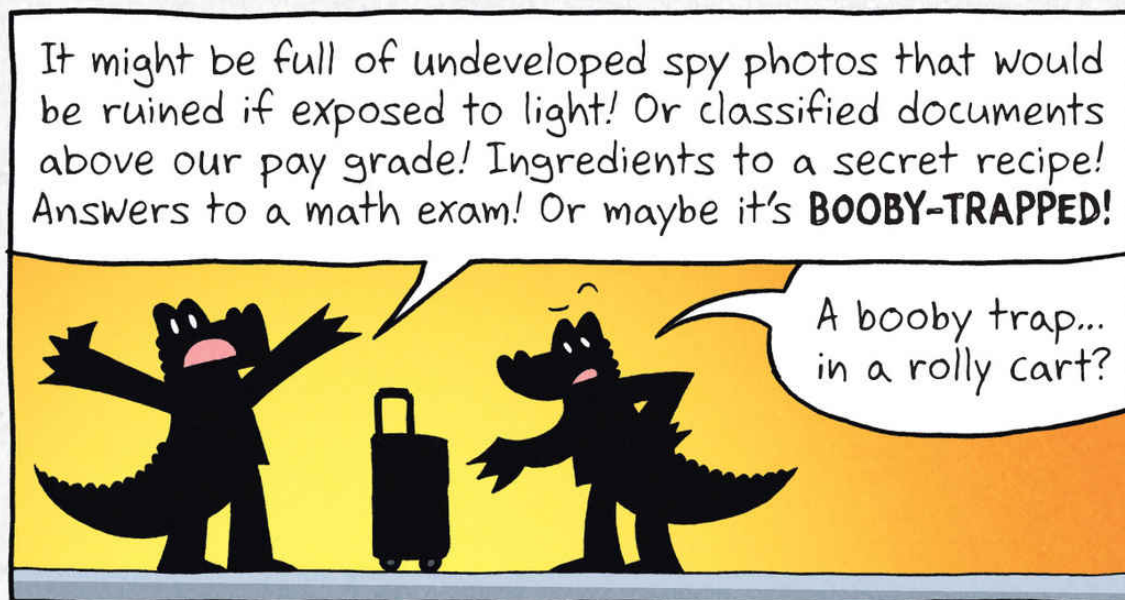
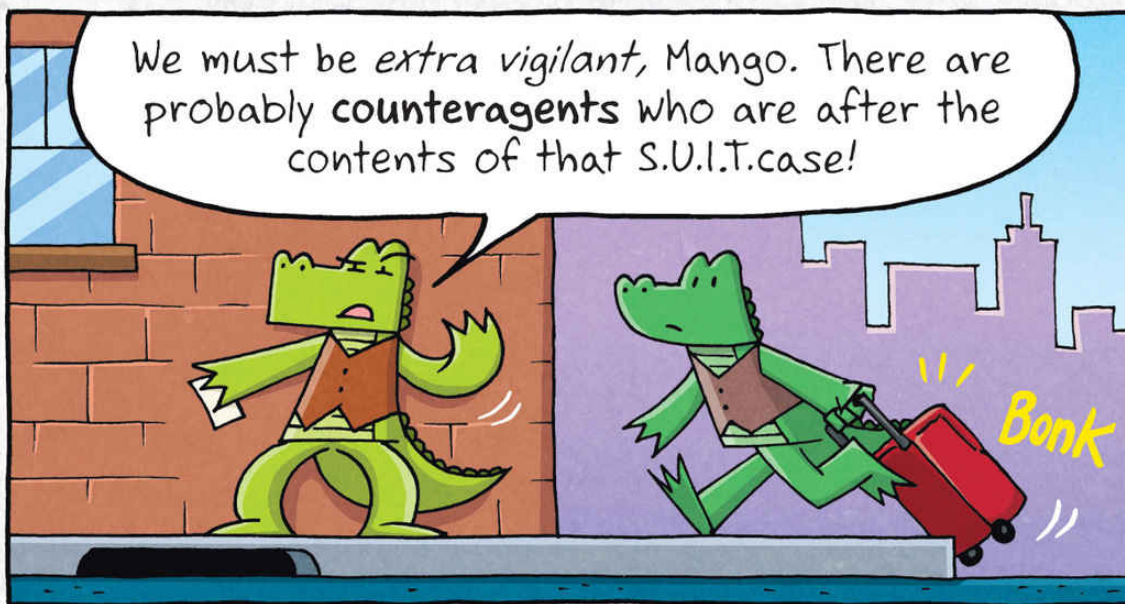


SEPTApus.



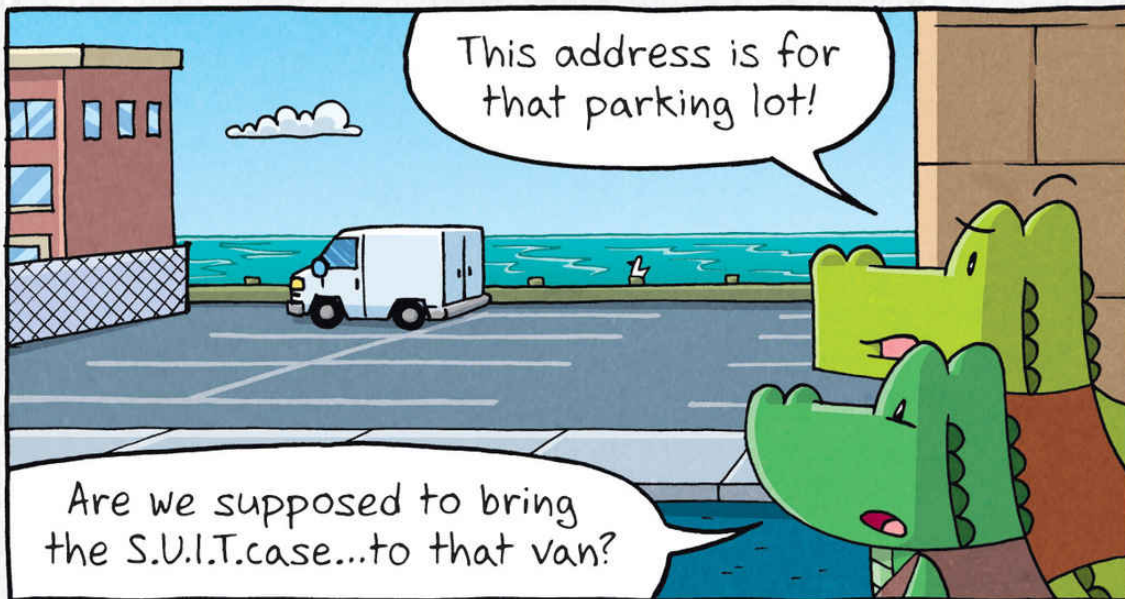


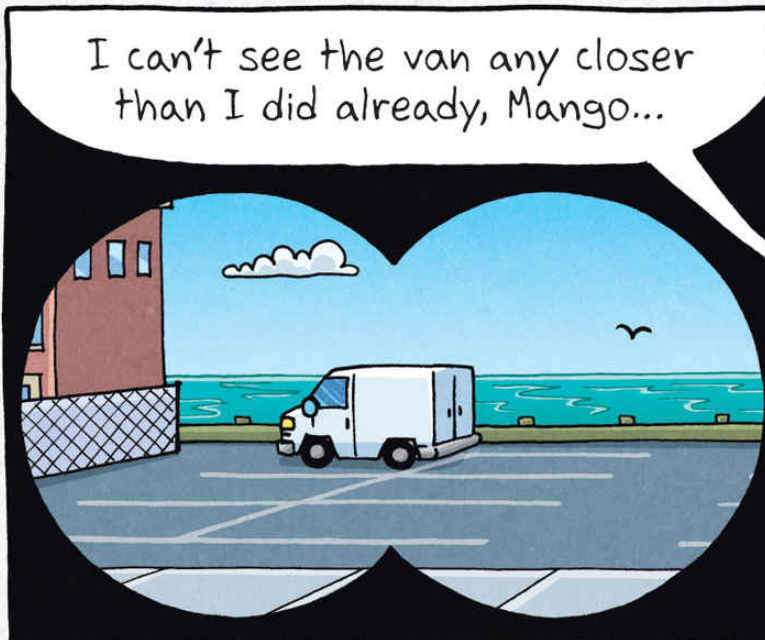
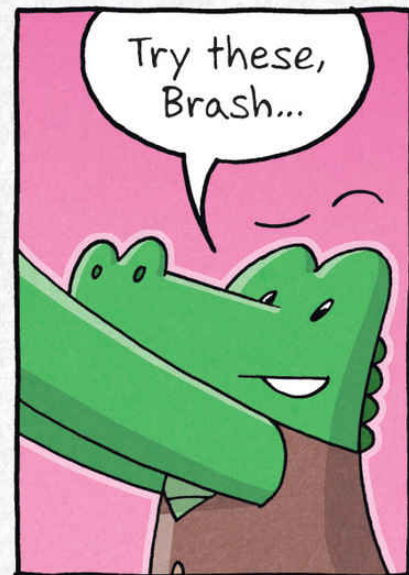






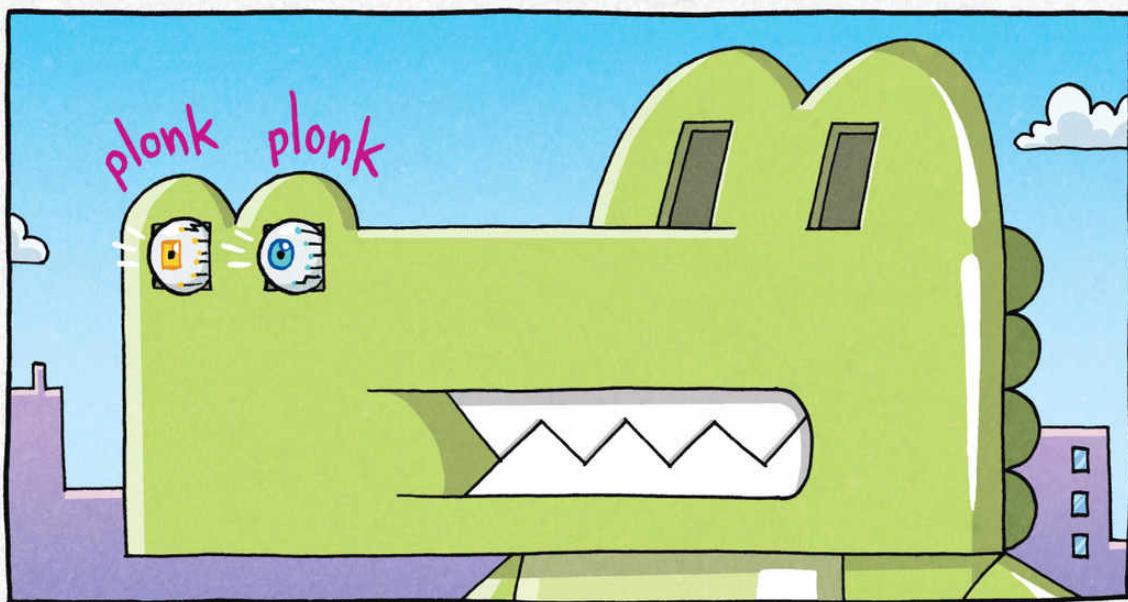
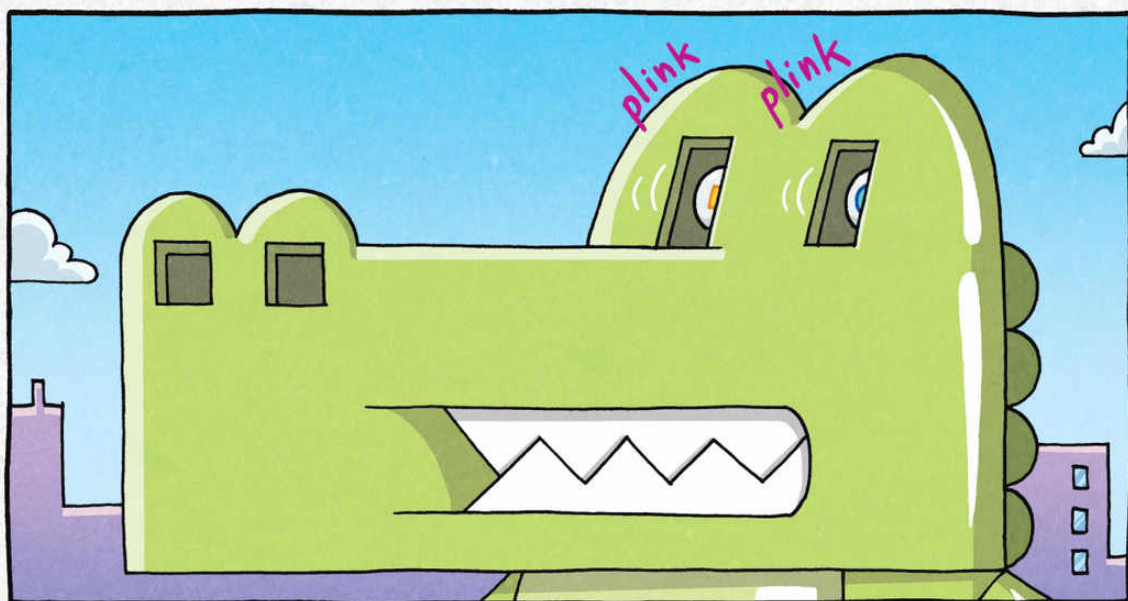
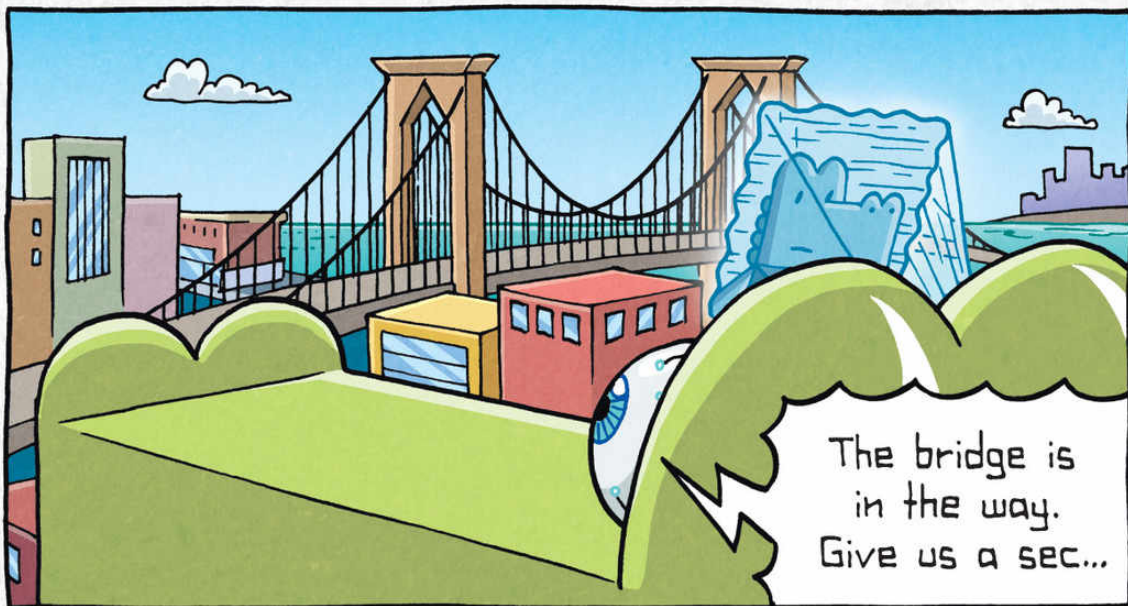
Chapter 3

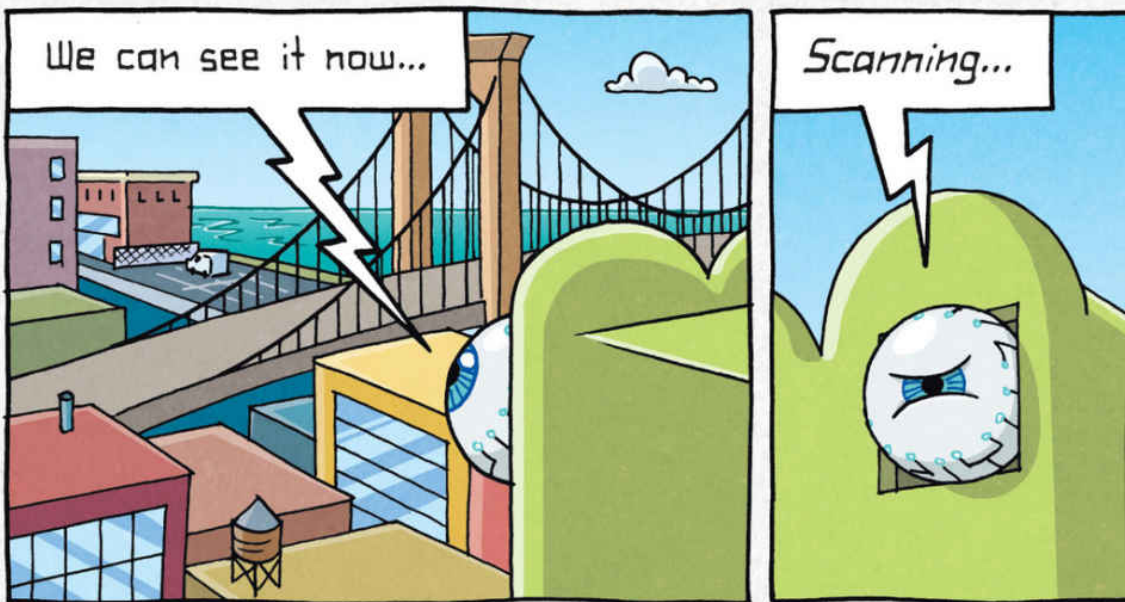


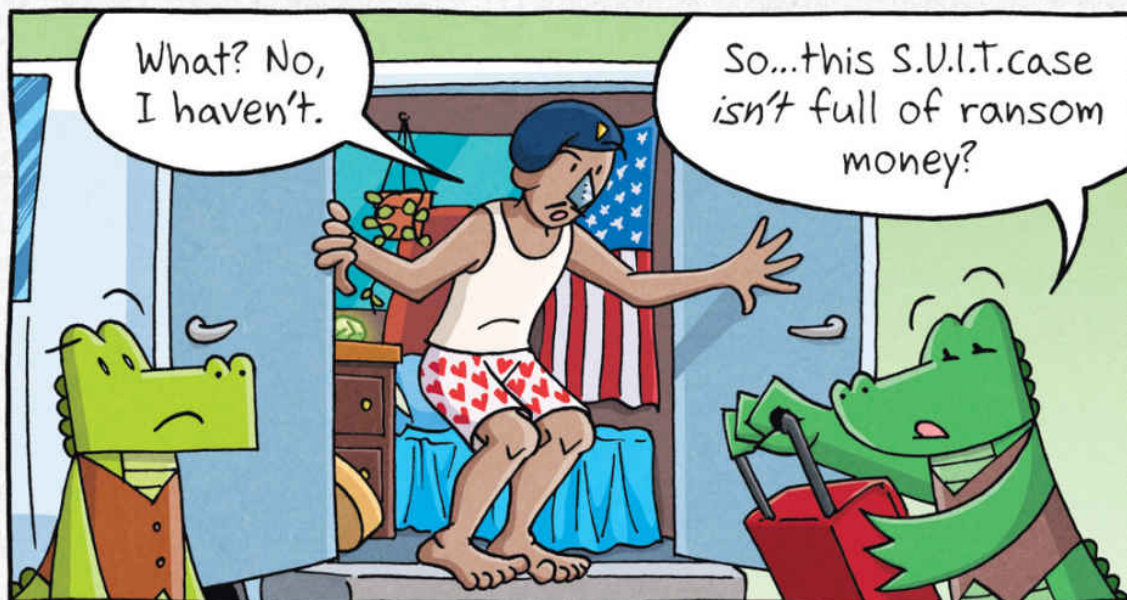


*Very Exciting Spy Technology













It does get a bit *lonely* in here, but this vacant lot doesn't allow **pets**, and all my plants keep *dying*.

So I bought this little **rock** to keep me company. You can't kill a rock!

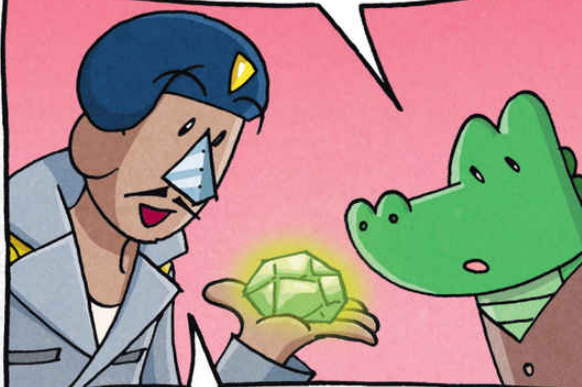
It's called a **BOULDER BUDDY**.



They're the *hot new thing*, apparently.



Does it do any tricks?



It knows "sit" and "stay."

COOOOOOL! I want one!
Brash, check it out!

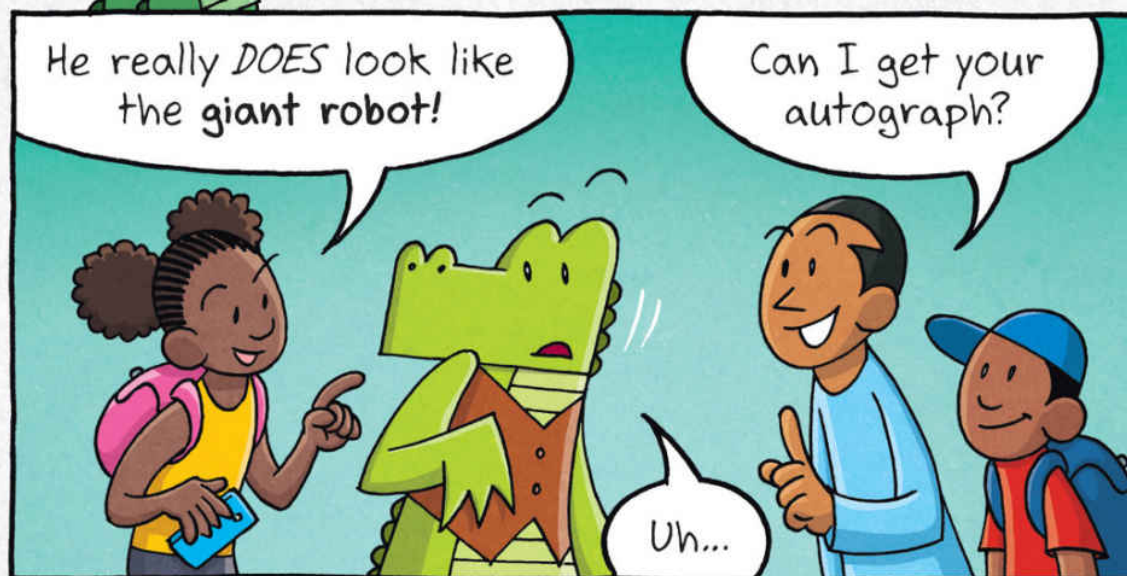
Eh, you see *one* rock, you've seen 'em all.

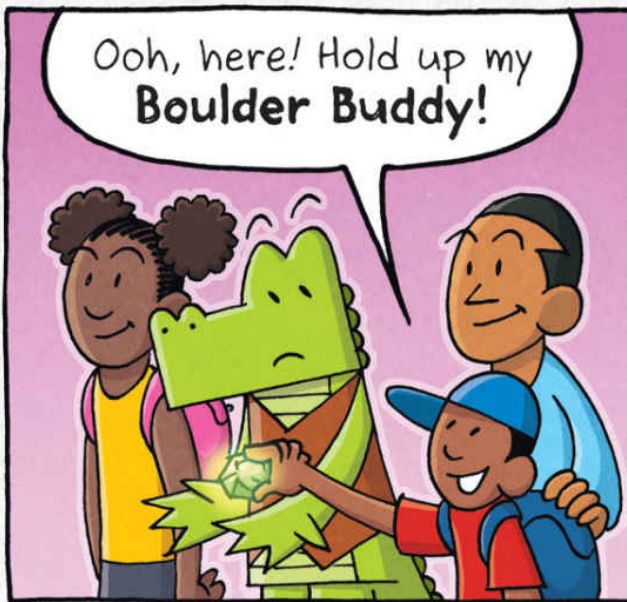






INVESTIGATOR!

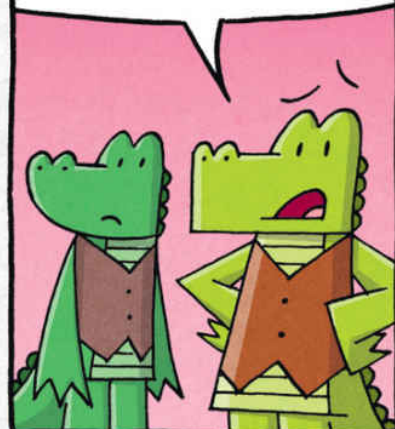




I guess we're not worthy of a photo with the famous Investigator.



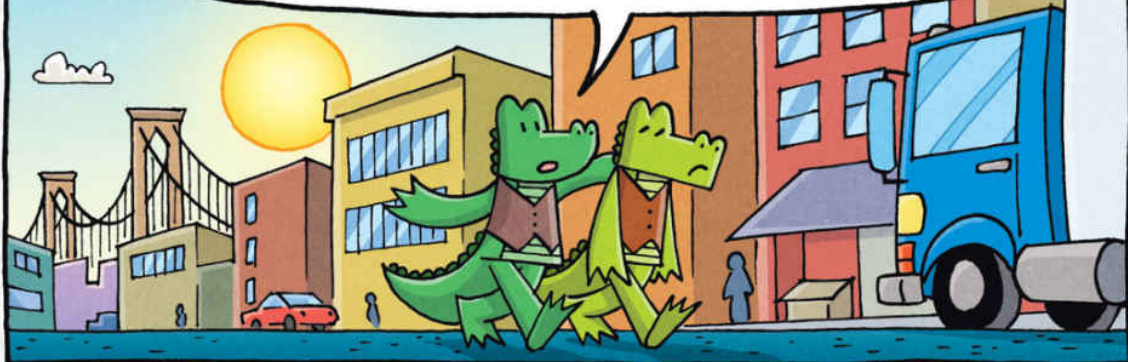
THIS is the problem, Mango.



If a *REAL* crime to investigate ever comes along, it will be impossible to go *UNDERCOVER* when everyone knows who we are!

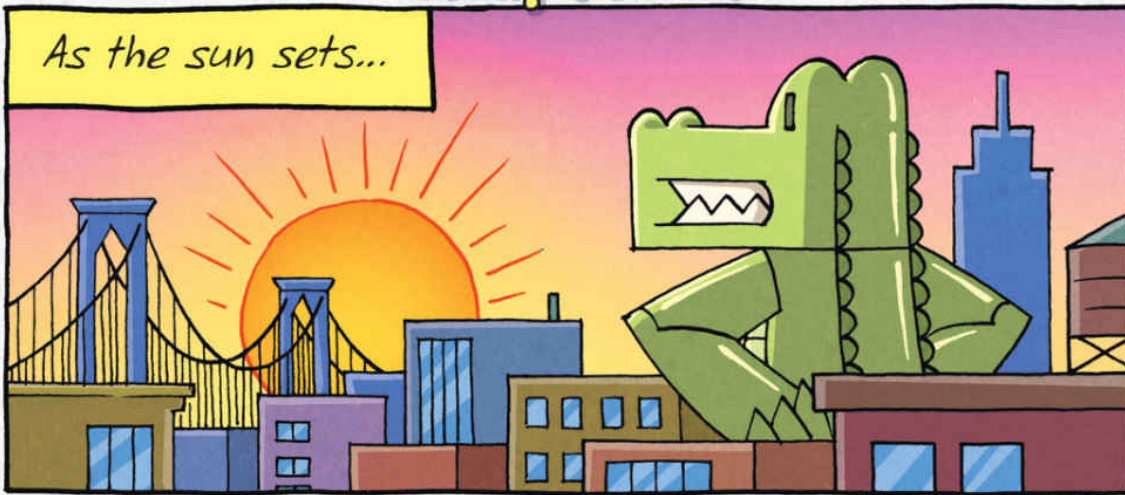


Technically, they only know who *YOU* are, Brash. Come on. We can face this challenge about your face when we get home.



Chapter 4

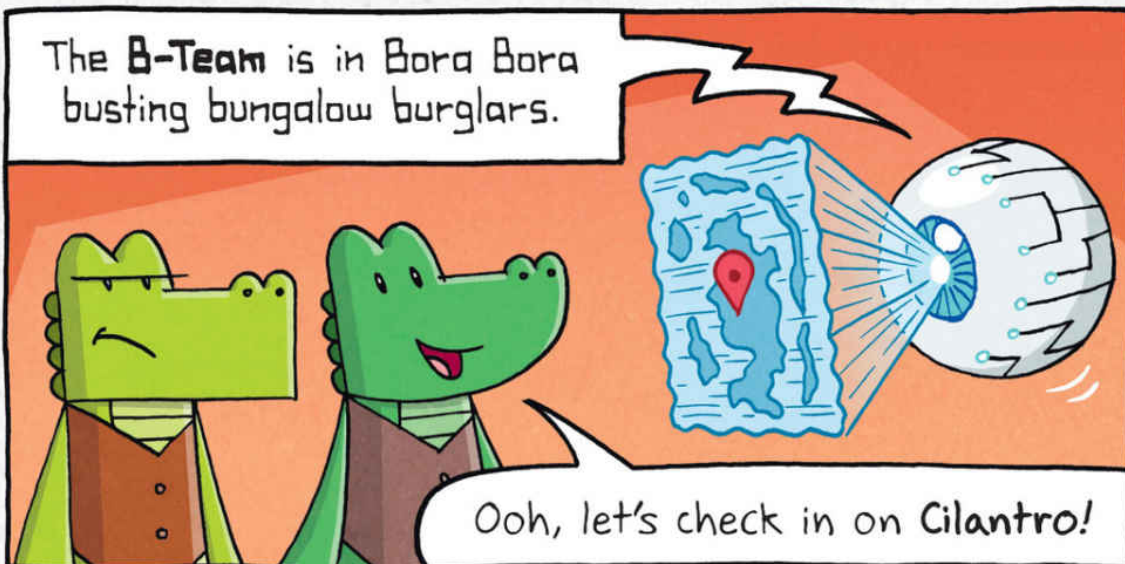
As the sun sets...

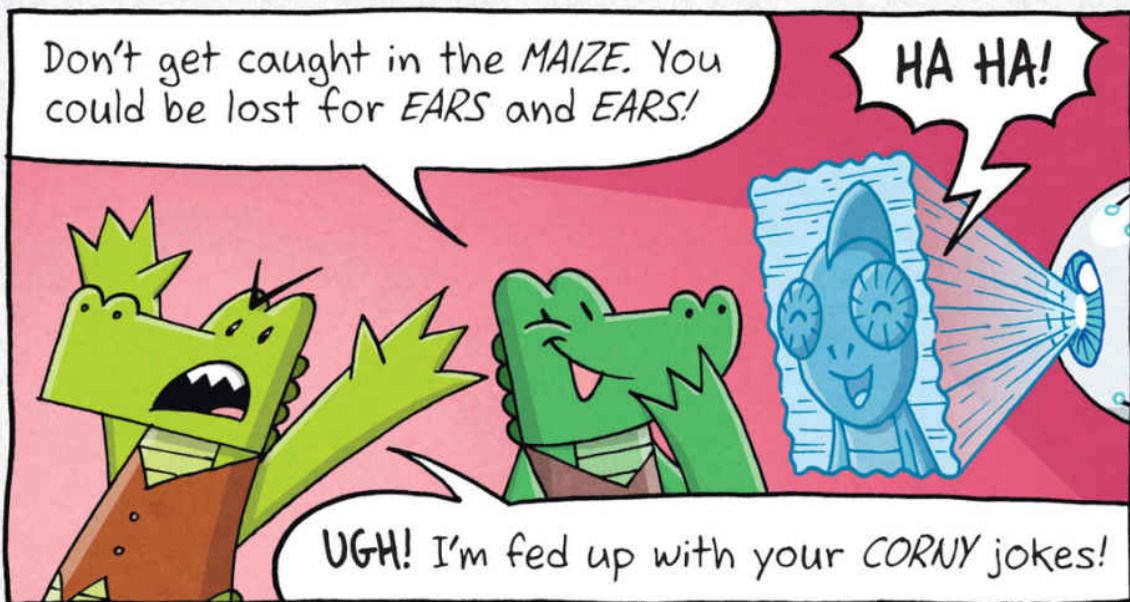
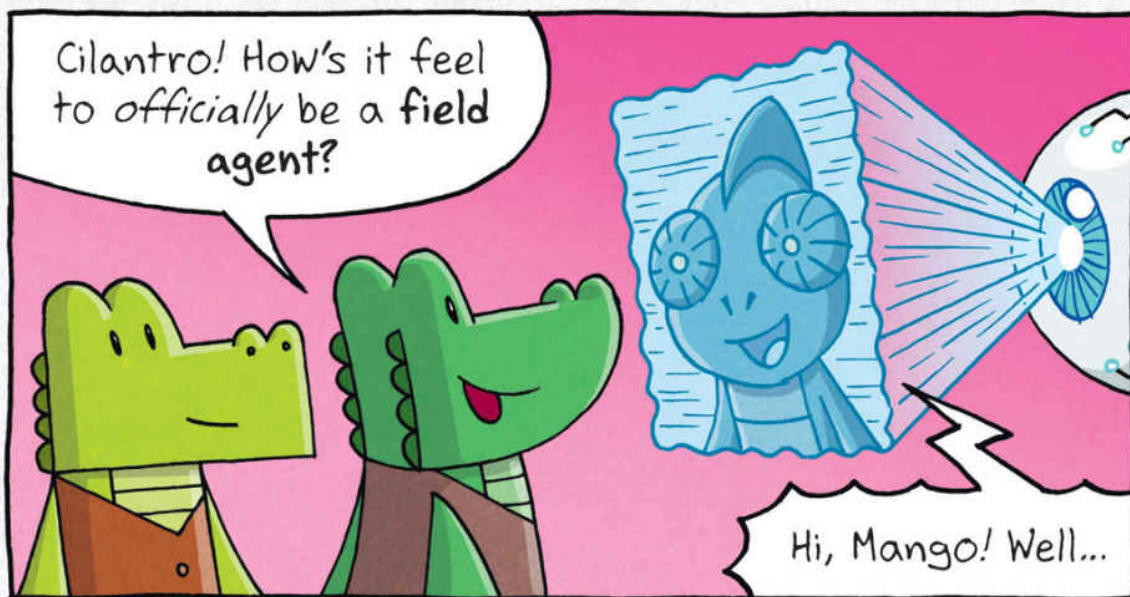


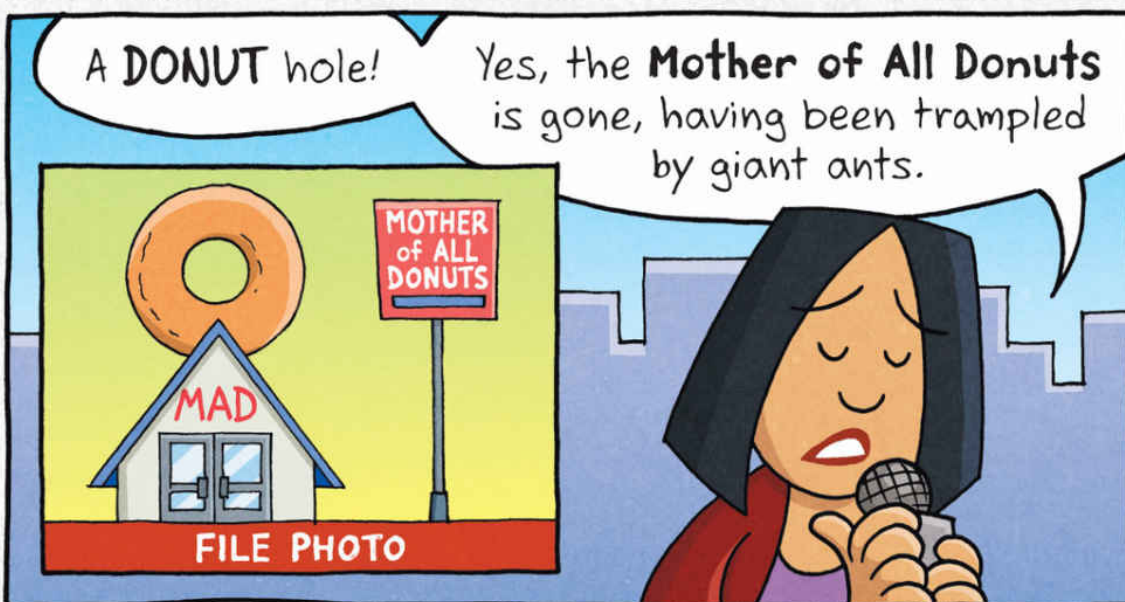
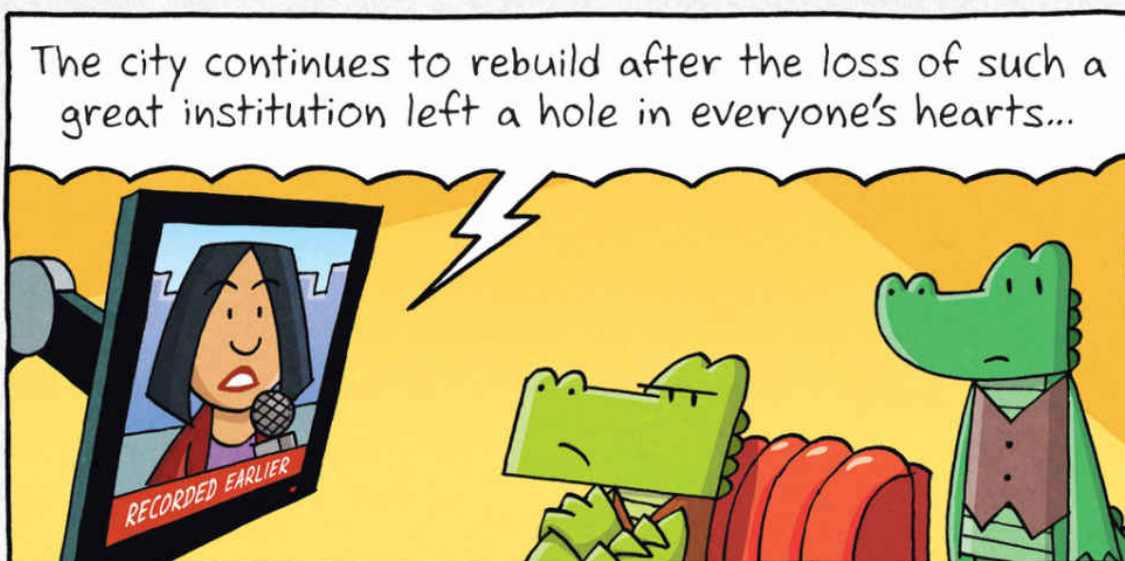
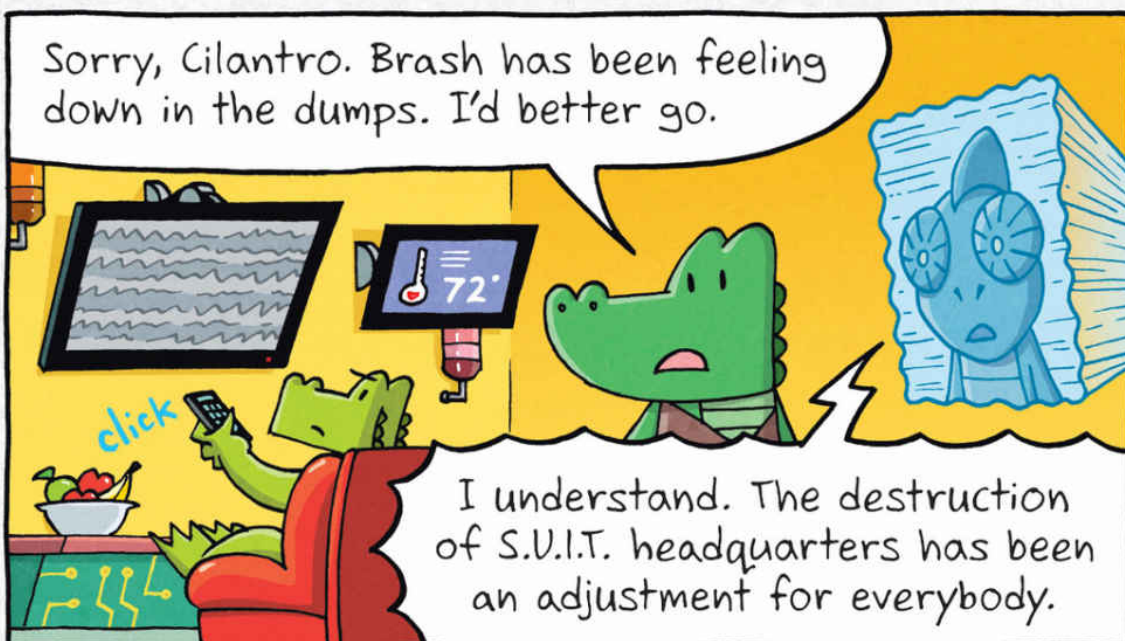
Welcome back, InvestiGators.
No suspicious activity to report.



The **B-Team** is in Bora Bora
busting bungalow burglars.





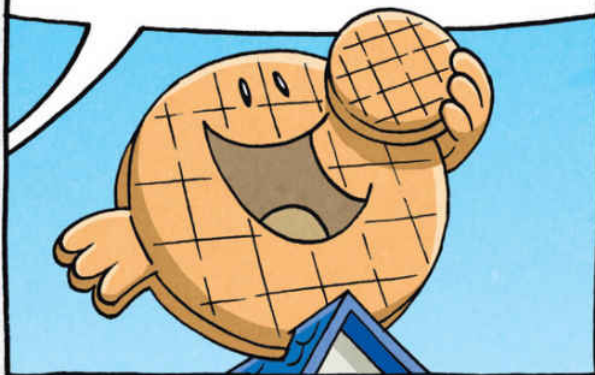


But business is booming across the street at the **Mother of All WAFFLES!**

Their **Boom-Chicken-Wa-Waffles** are selling like hotcakes! Even their **HOTCAKES** are selling like hotcakes!



Profits have *tripled* since the installation of the MAW's new roof mascot.



Looks like they replaced the concrete **Crackerdile**—I mean, **Waffledile**.



When I first learned **Daryl** actually survived that **baking accident** and had turned into an **evil saltine cracker**, I'd wonder if there was any piece of my former friend and partner left.



There were *ONLY* pieces of him left after you—uh, that is, **MegaRoboBrash**—crushed him into rubble.

Now, what was once a donut hole
is a *whole new store!*



And by
NEW I mean OLD,
because it's an
antiques shop.

**Anjie's
Antiques!**

Anjie's Antiques
is the only place
you can buy...

...BOULDER BUDDIES!

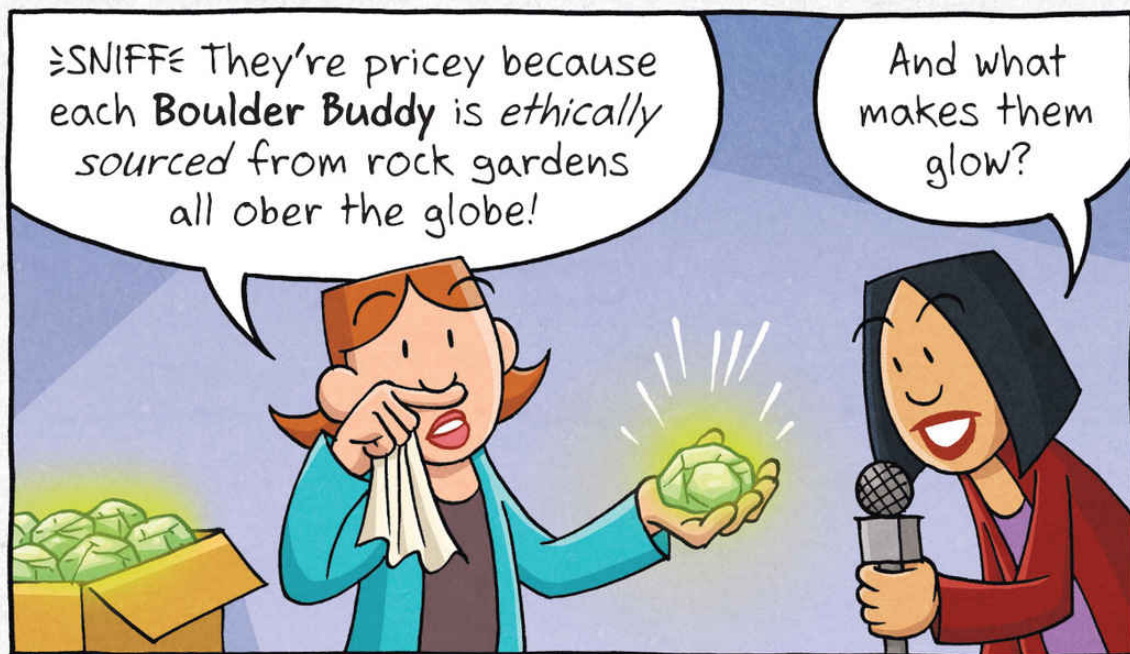
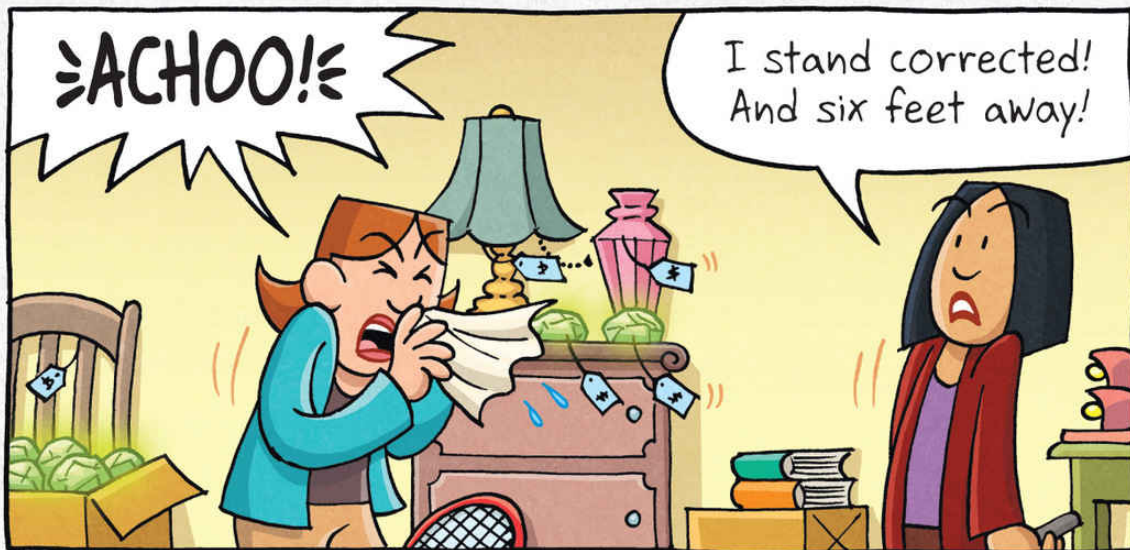
The hot new collectible
that'll rock your world,
and brainchild of the
shop's owner, **Anjie!**

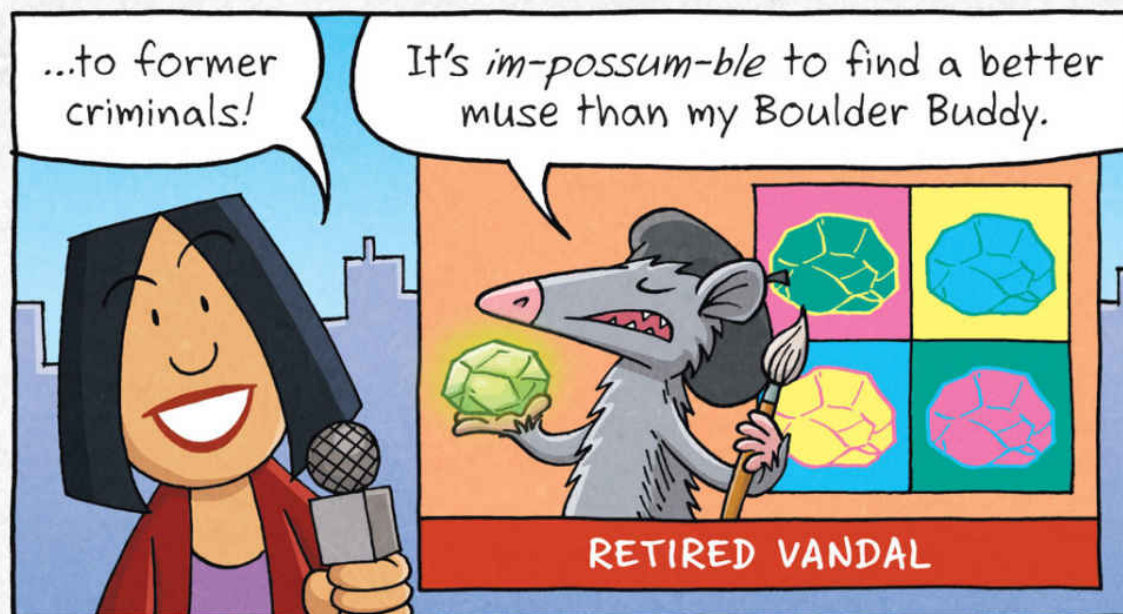
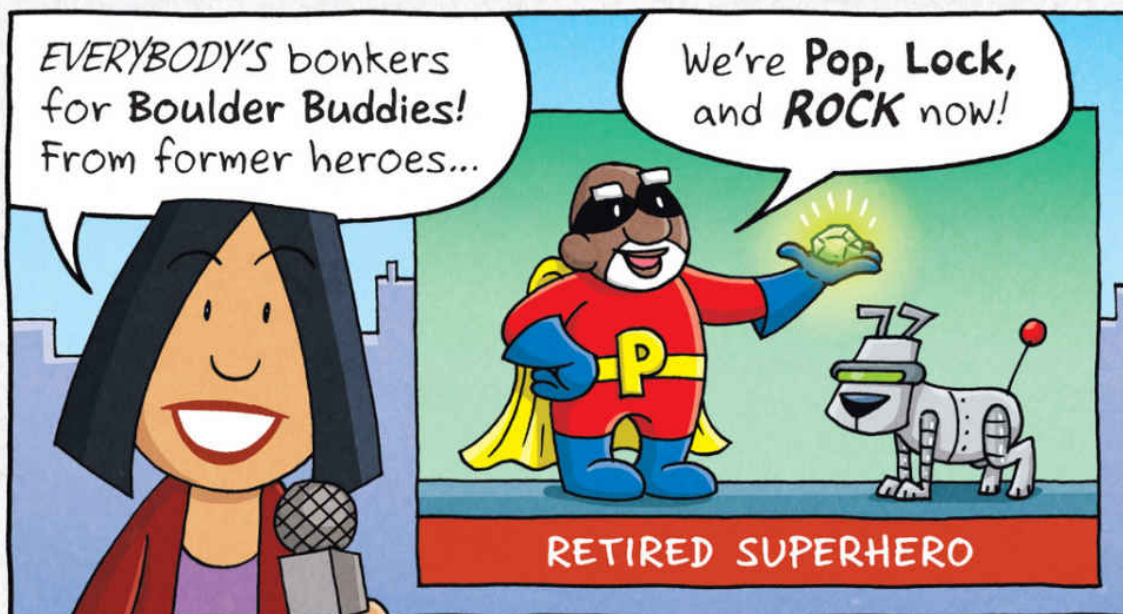


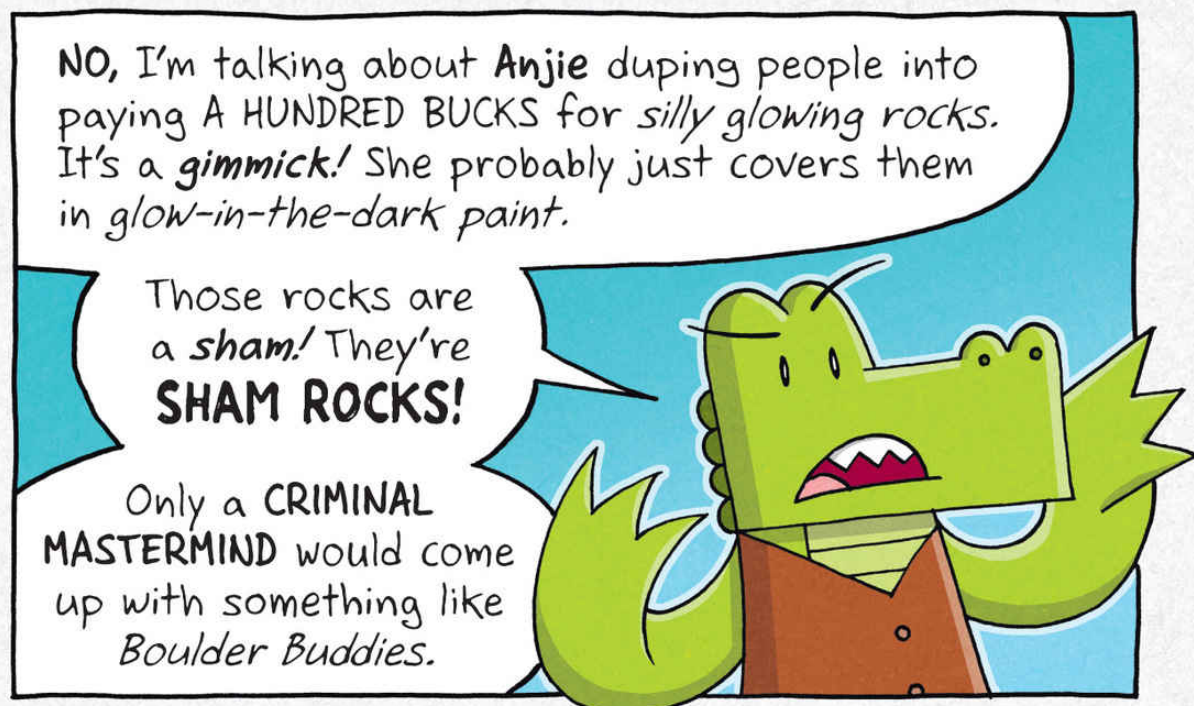
Everything OLD is NEW
at my antiques shop, Cici.
And what could be older
than *rocks?*

Well, the **\$100 price tag**
is certainly nothing to
sneeze at!









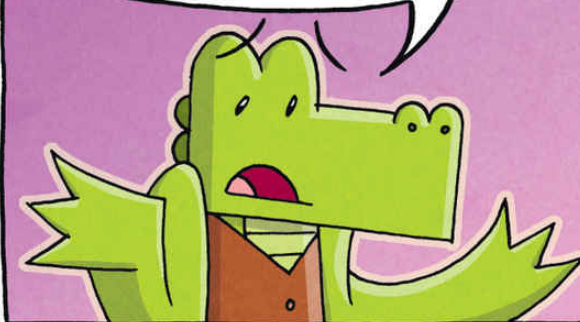
Crime isn't gone—just harder to *SEE*! Criminals are getting **smarter**. More **cautious**! Who knows, maybe they've all huddled up somewhere to coordinate all their criminal business **RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE???** These rocks could be part of something even **MORE NEFARIOUS!**



BRASH! Are you saying the Boulder Buddies are... **EVIL?!**



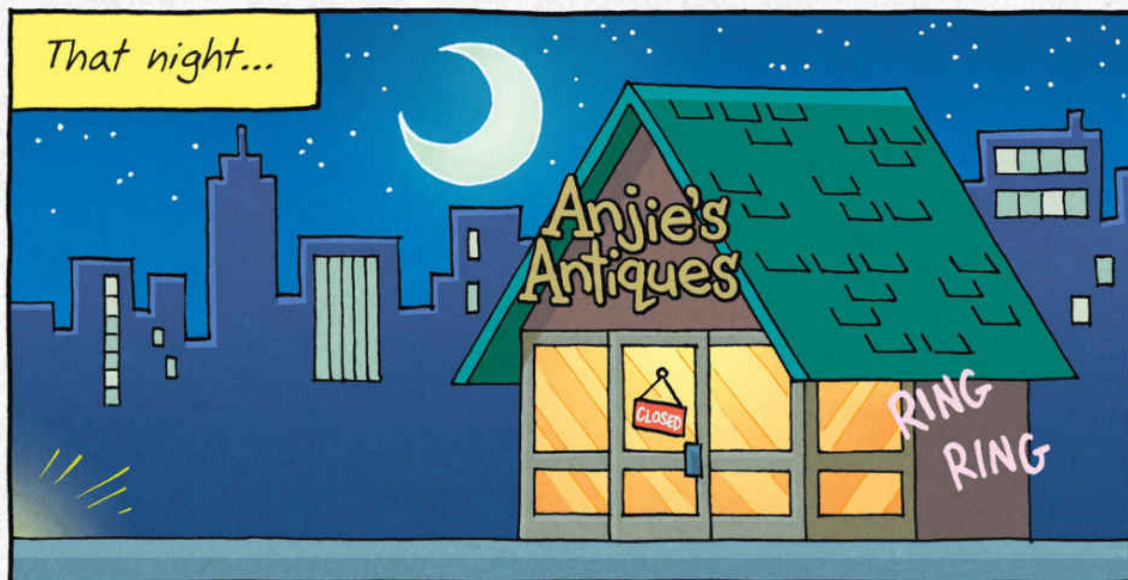
Evil...? Er, no. I just think they're a **rip-off**.

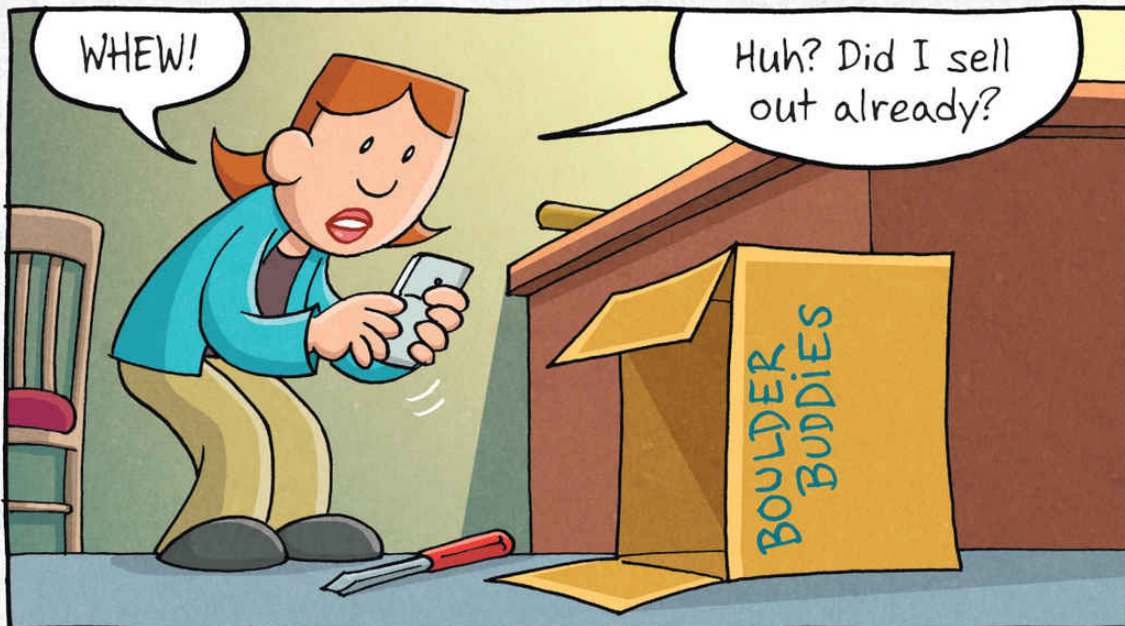


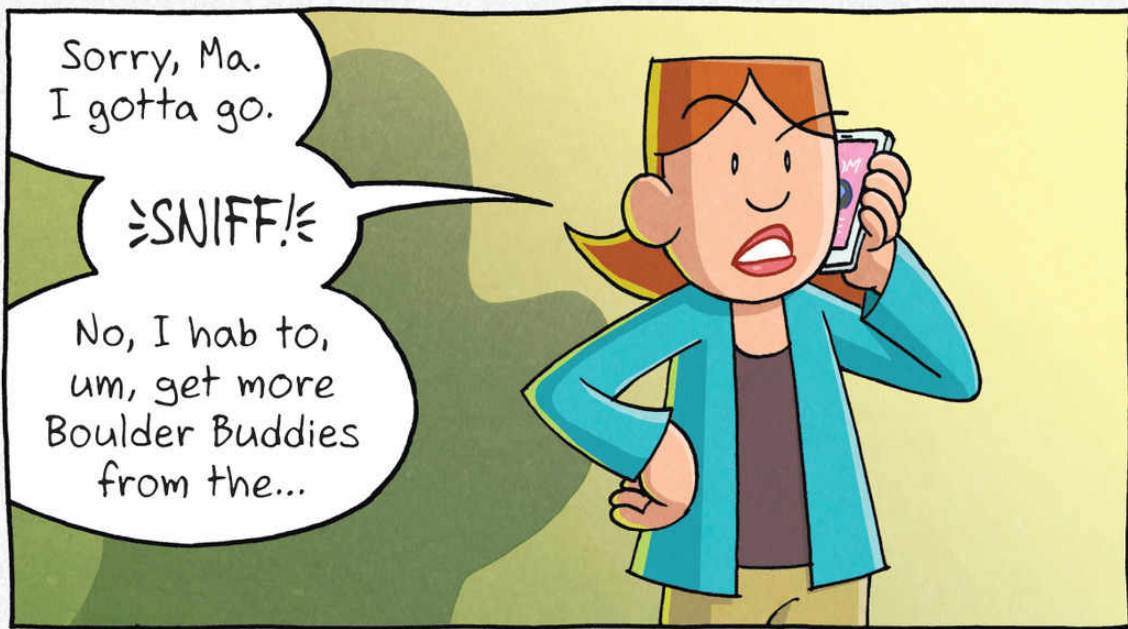
Good! 'Cause *I'M* gonna buy one for myself first thing in the morning!

G'NIGHT!

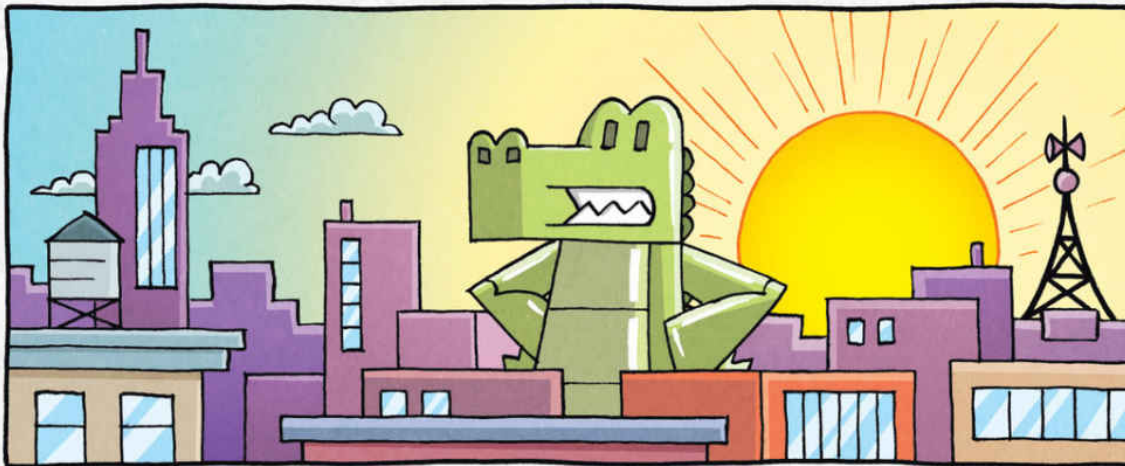
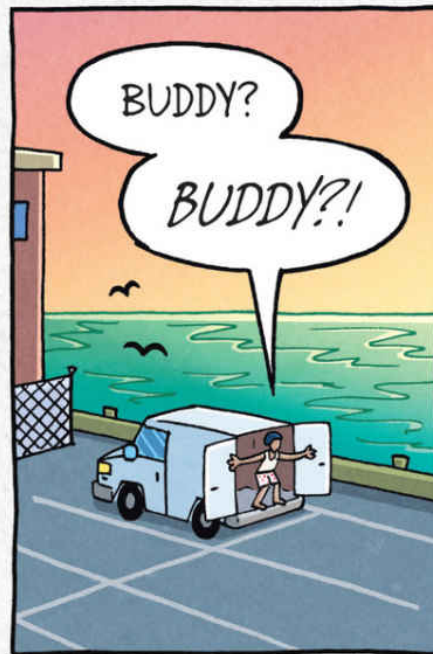
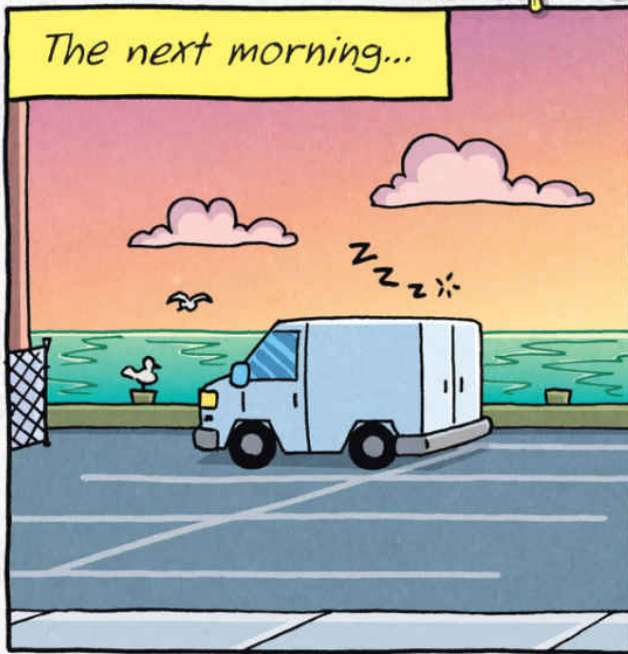


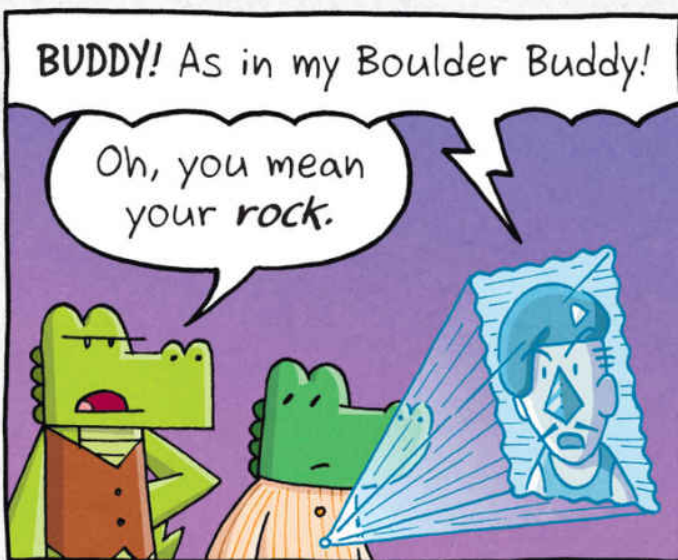


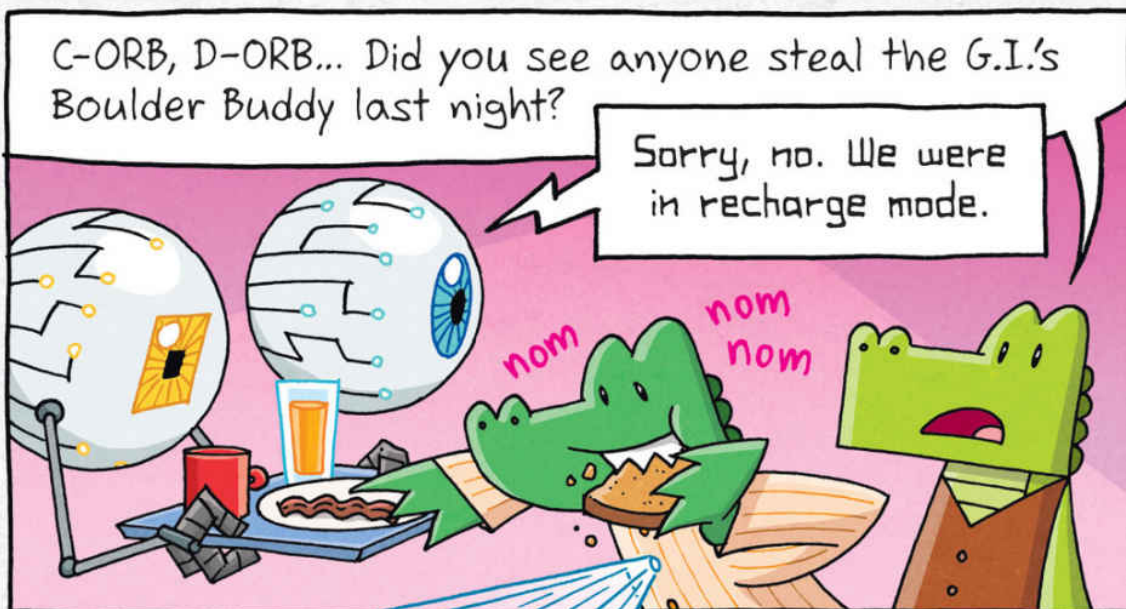




Chapter 5

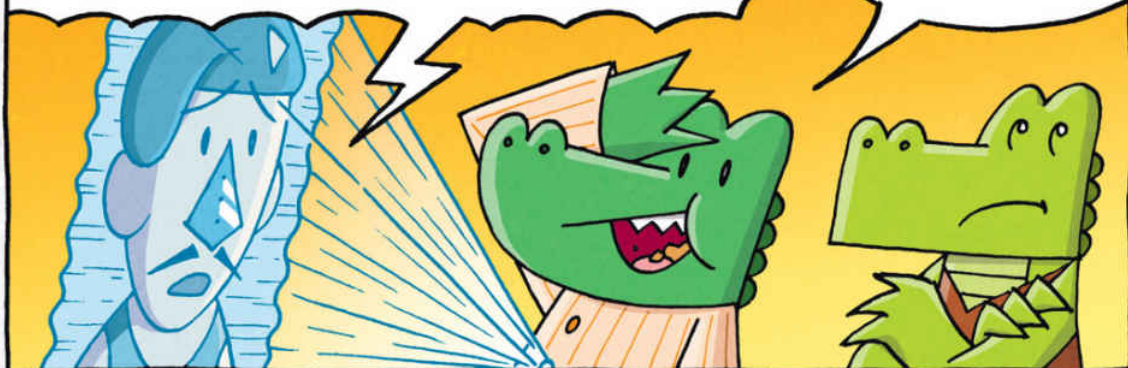




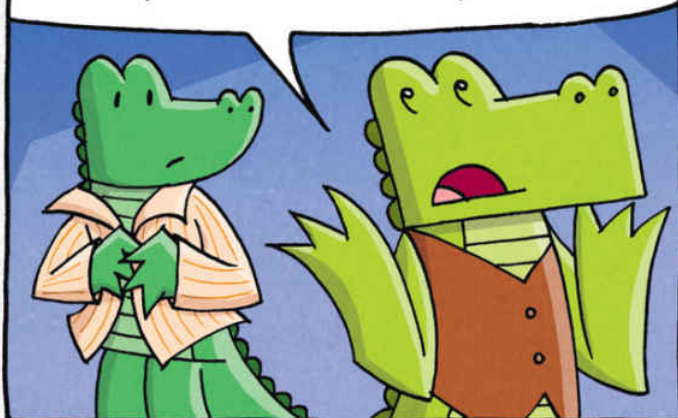


Mango and Brash, your **mission** is to find out who took my Boulder Buddy! I'm worried about the little guy!

We'll leave no stone unturned!



FEH! Some "mission." The General Inspector probably *misplaced* that silly rock.



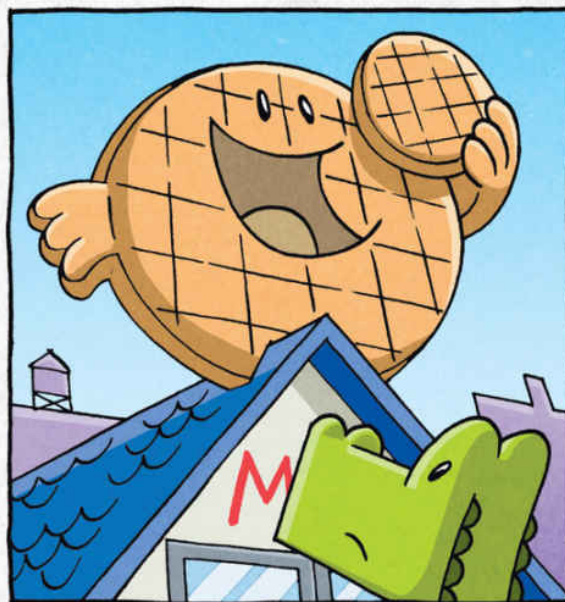
I know *exactly* how to solve *THIS* mystery, Mango...

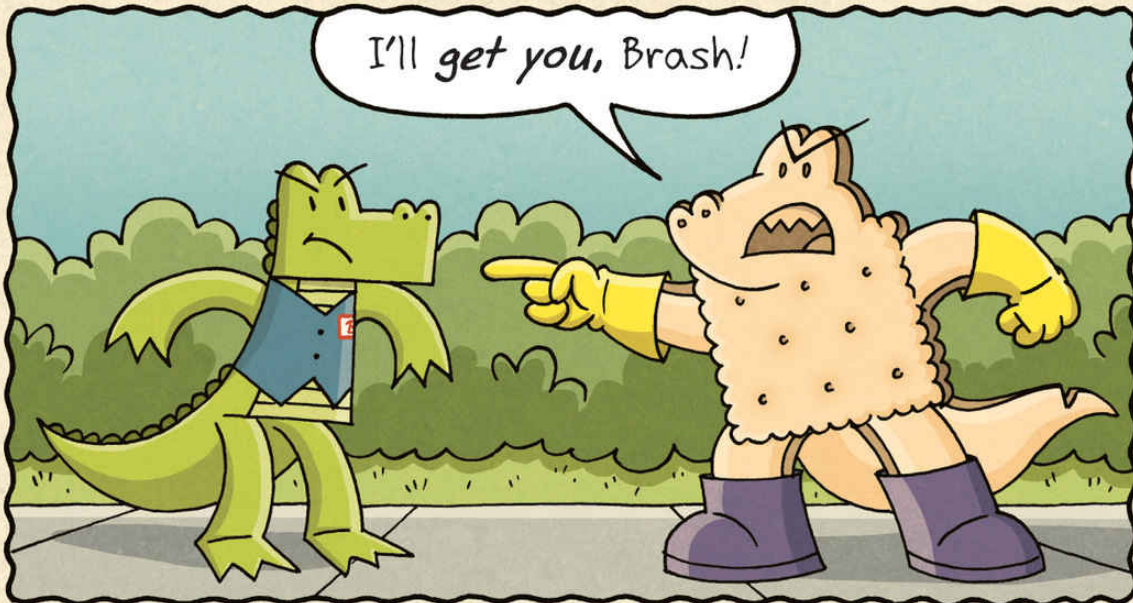
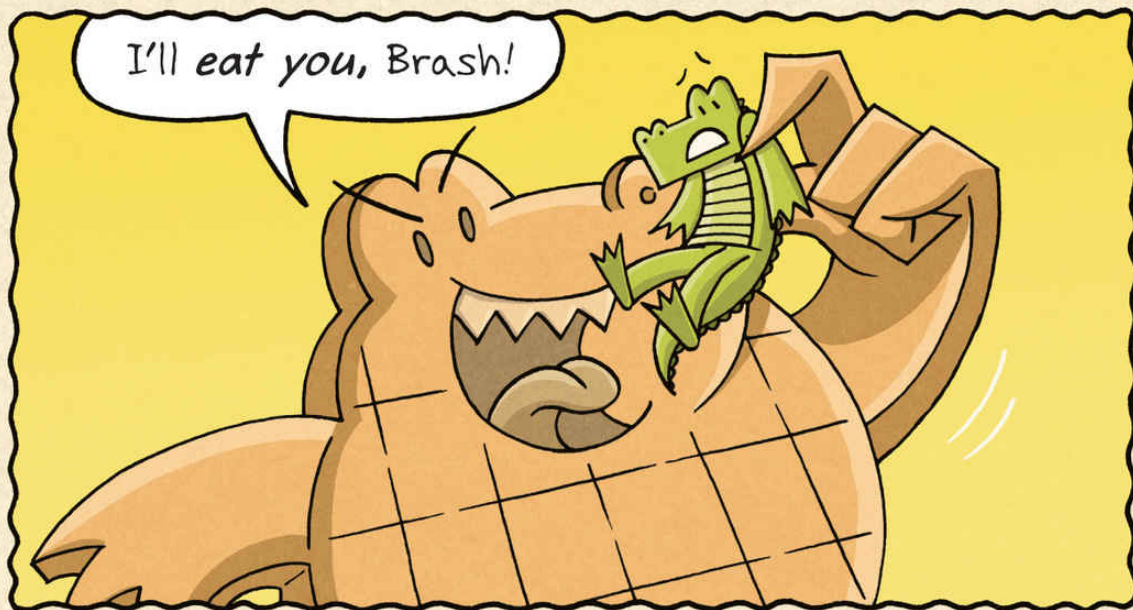


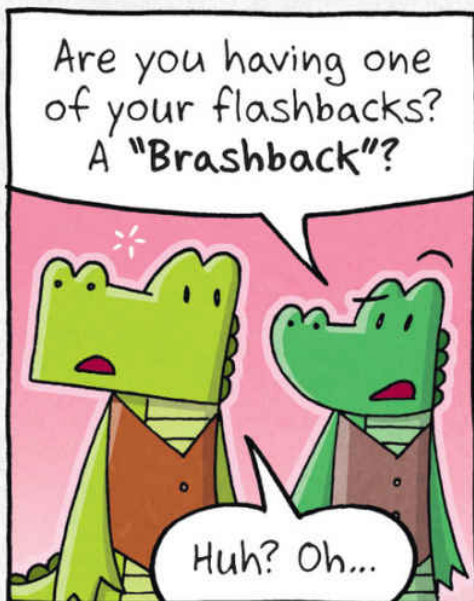
We'll go to Anjie's Antiques and buy him a **NEW** Boulder Buddy. He'll never know the difference!

Hmm, *OKAY*... But if you want my silence, you gotta buy one for *ME*, too!









My daughter Anjie, of Anjie's Antiques. She's **MISSING!**



Oh, hello. Are you the InvestiGator's friend?



NO! I mean, YES! But I'm **ALSO** an InvestiGator!

But you don't look anything like that building.



Ma'am, tell us what happened.

I was on the phone with Anjie last night. She was working late and had sold out of Boulder Buddies.



SOLD OUT?
Dang it, I wanted one.

She told me she had to get more from the **Rock Mobster!**

ROCK MOBSTER?



That's who she said! Then the line went silent, and when she didn't pick up again, I drove over as fast as I could!



When I got here, all I found was her phone. And it's *completely busted!*



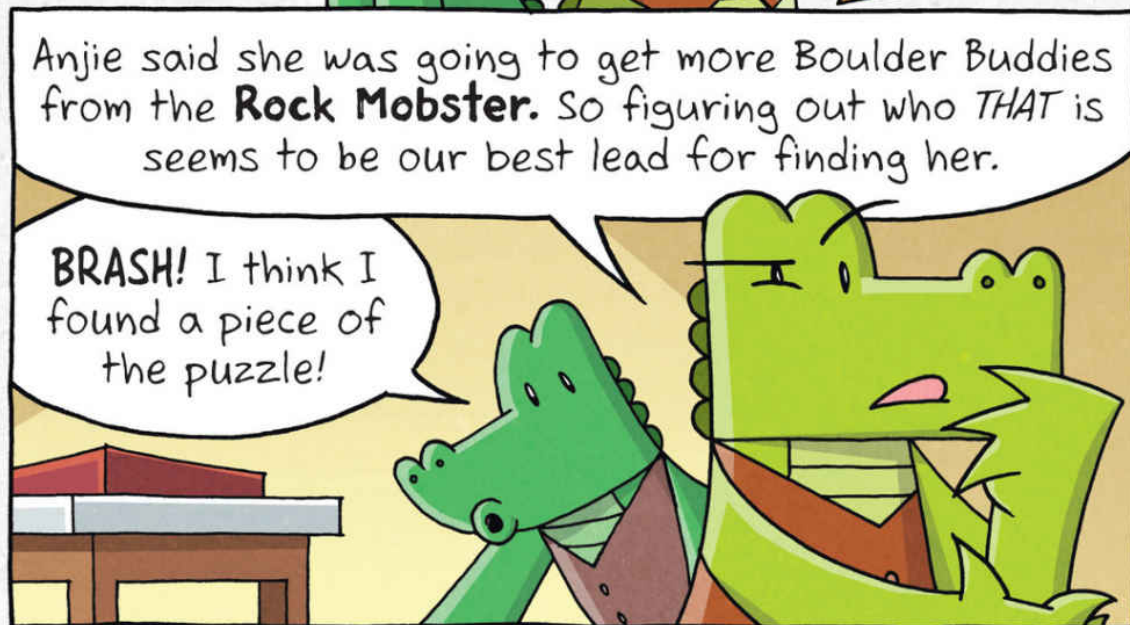
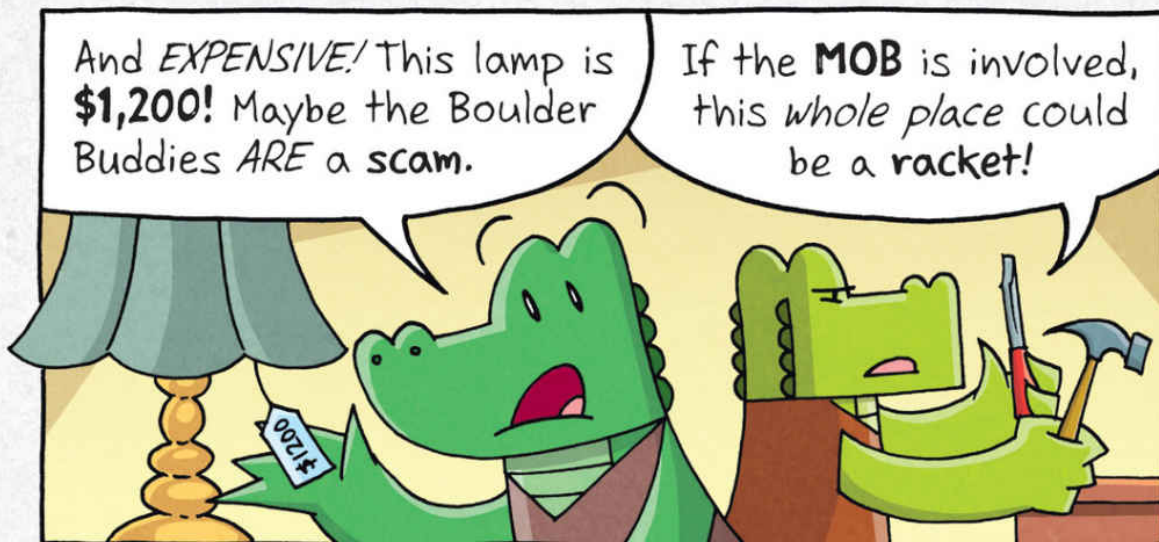
I don't know how my Anjie got mixed up with **criminals!** But, please, can you help?

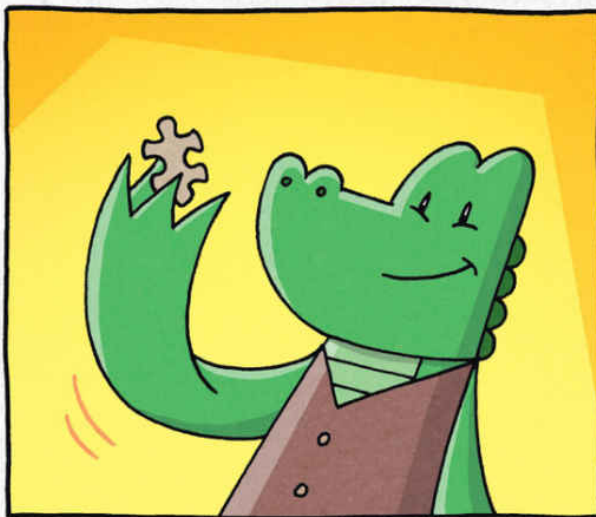




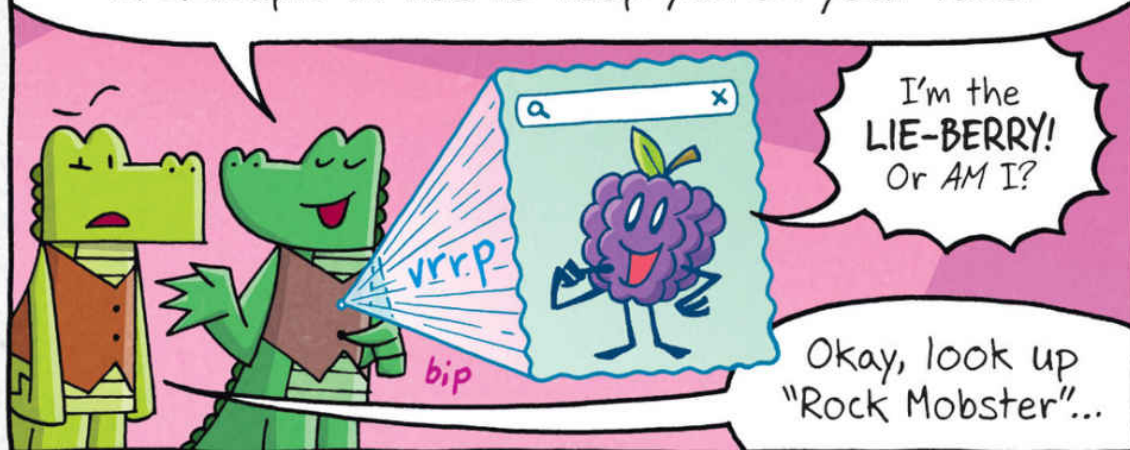
Chapter 6



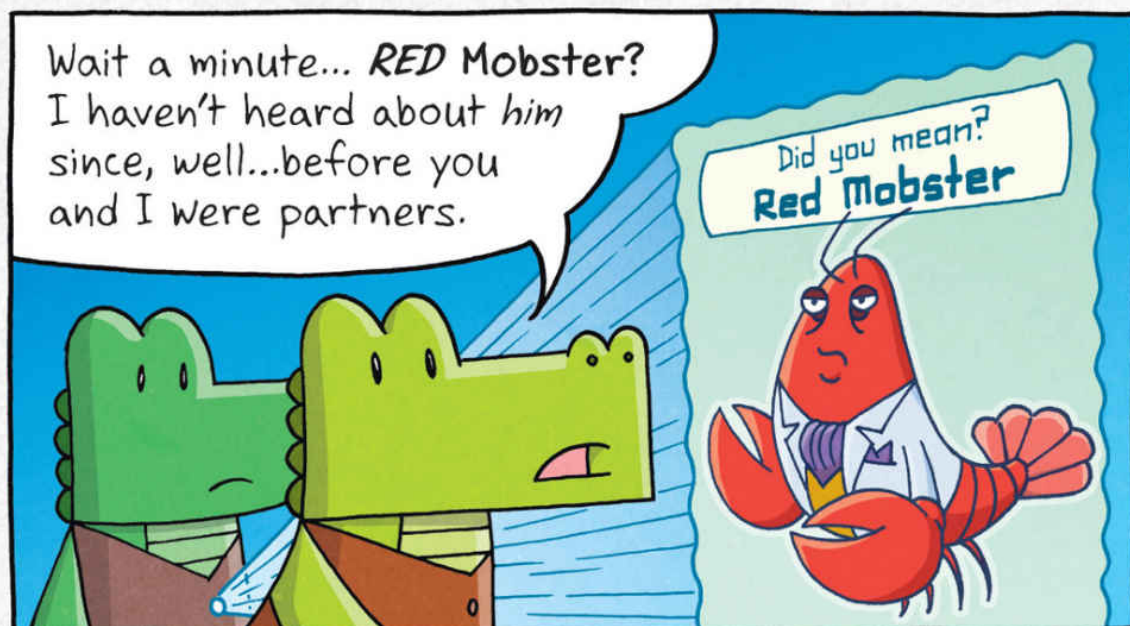




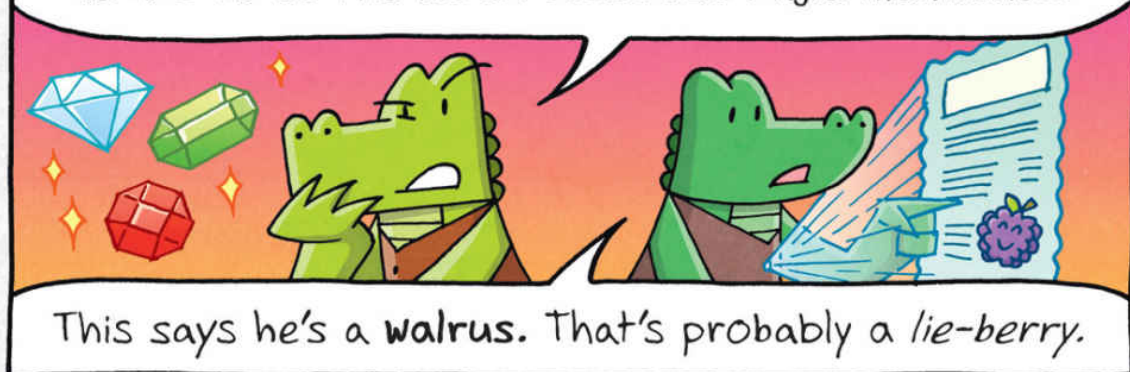
No, the **LIE-BERRY** is a website that has all sorts of facts about anything and anyone! But it also throws in a couple of lies to keep you on your toes.



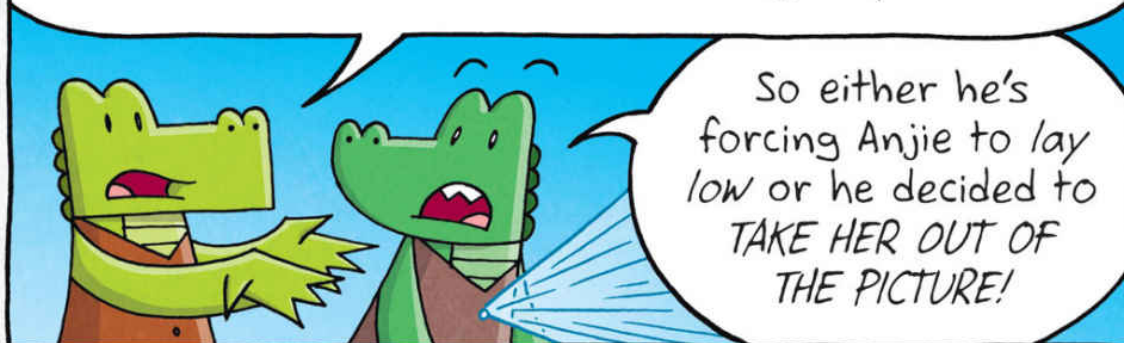
Wait a minute... **RED** Mobster? I haven't heard about him since, well...before you and I were partners.



Red had his claws in all sorts of shady dealings. Like counterfeit gems, diamonds, and other **hot rocks**! He **HAS** to be the **ROCK MOBSTER** Anjie mentioned!



Red wouldn't be happy that Anjie's made Boulder Buddies into *REALLY* hot rocks. Their popularity would draw unwanted **attention** to his illegal operations!



So either he's forcing Anjie to lay low or he decided to **TAKE HER OUT OF THE PICTURE!**

We have to find Red Mobster *fast*! Where would this urchin be hiding out?



This says he's in the **garbage business**. Is that a *lie-berry*?



That's just a sly way of saying **organized crime**.

Well, it says he's also opened a nightclub. But there's **FIFTY** names listed! **Forty-nine** of these are gonna be *lie-berries*! It'll take **hours** to narrow down.



Welp, better get started.

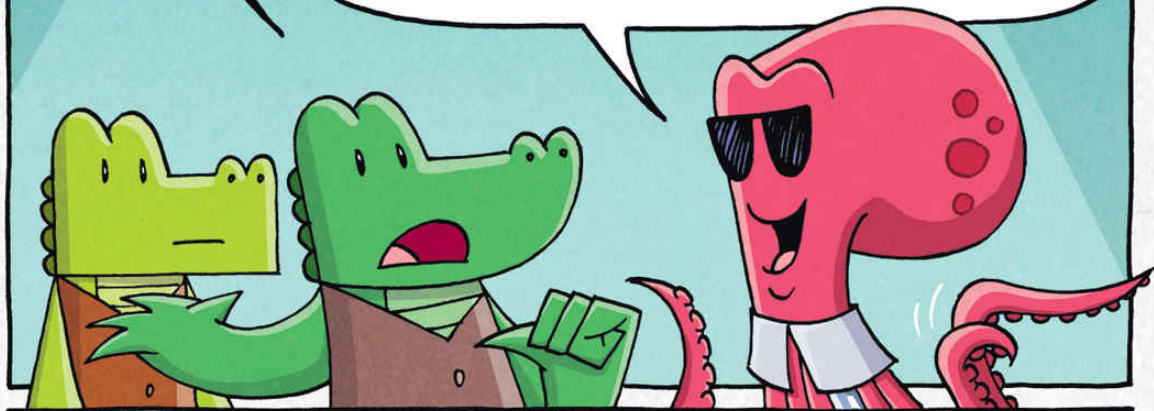


Chapter 7

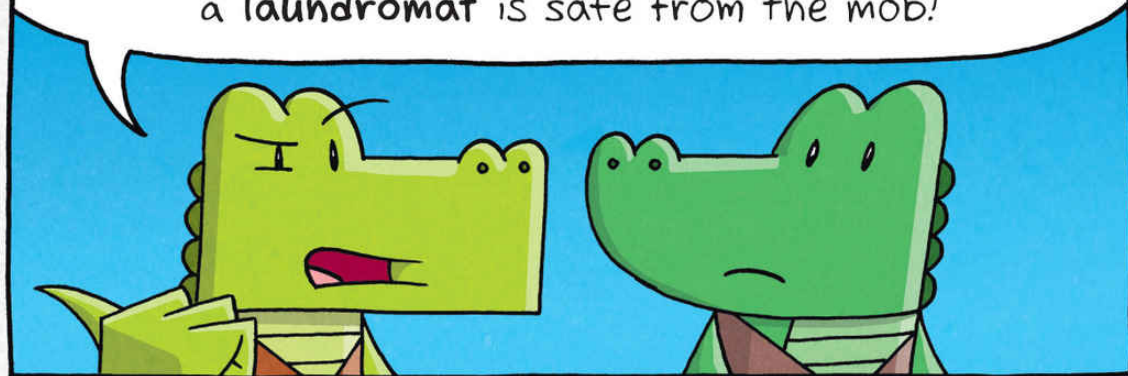


No, I mean we're going undercover as **MOBSTERS!**

Oh, I gotcha. I'll see what I can whip up in the back. Wait right here.



Armando's Boulder Buddy is also missing. Not even a **laundromat** is safe from the mob!



TA-DA!

The latest in criminal fashion for the gangster on the go!



V.E.S.T.s loaded with plenty of gadgets you'll never use, plus matching overcoats and fedoras!



Hey, what's the dill with the pickles?

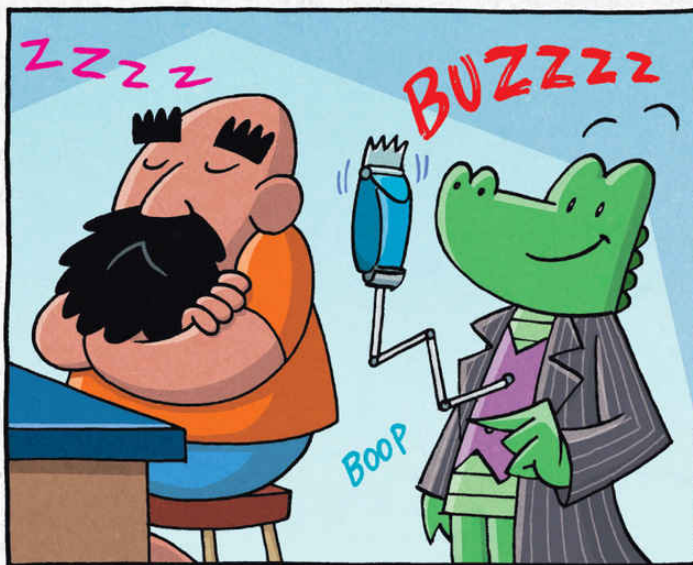
What, didn't you know mobsters love pickles?



Smooooooth...
What is this, velvet?

Nice work,
Sven.

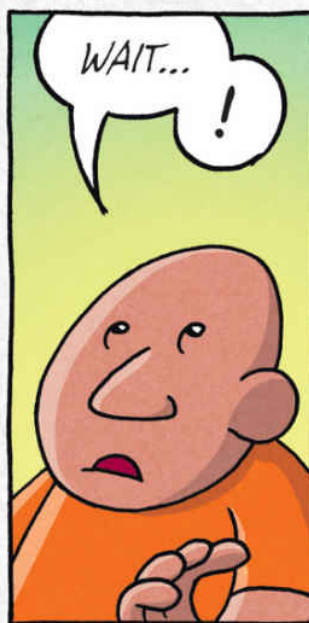






BZZZZ





Chapter 8



Brash, we're a **Special Undercover Investigation Team!**
I know you're worried about being recognized, but
Anjie's *LIFE* could be on the line here!



You're right, Mango.

The stakes will be
high...but facing risks
to save others is what
being a **secret agent**
is all about!

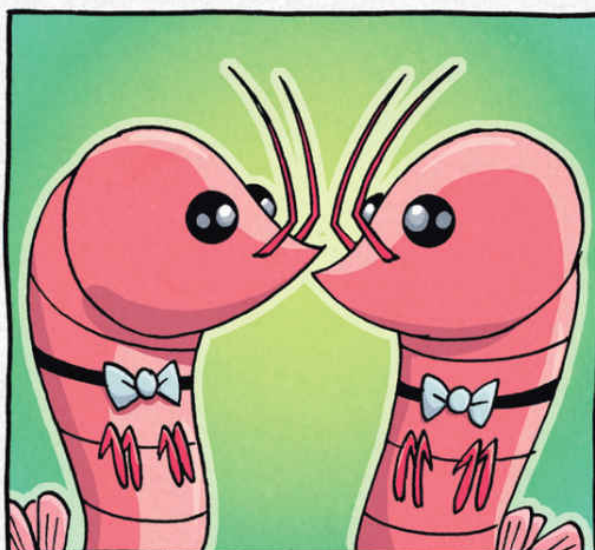
Just try not to draw attention to your face.
I'll talk our way past these shrimp.

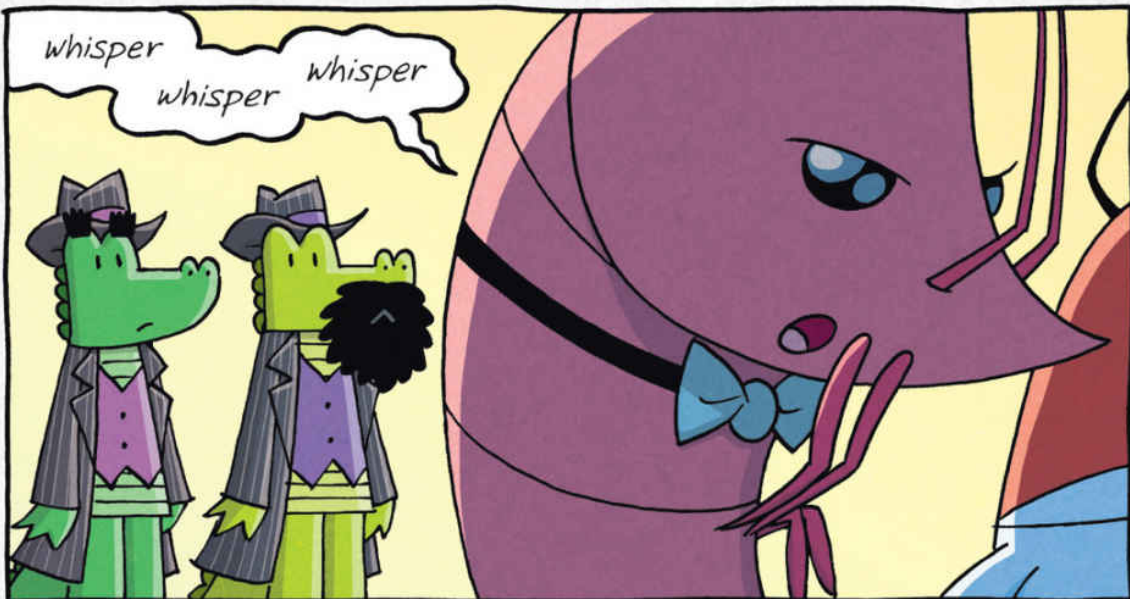
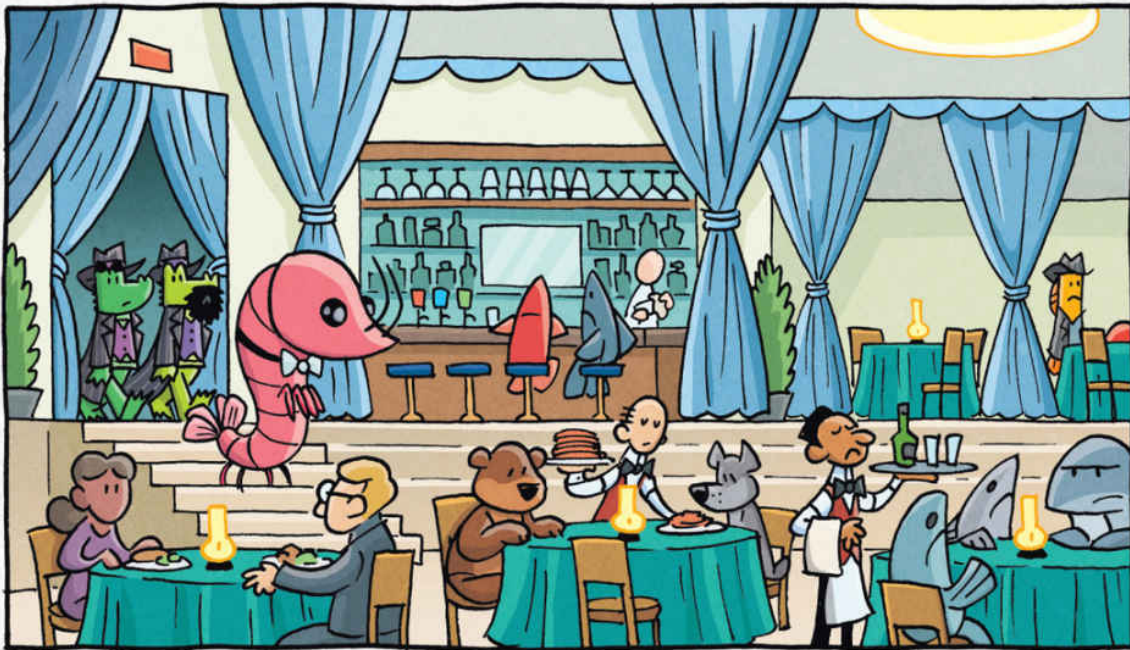


Who you callin'
shrimp, **TINY?**

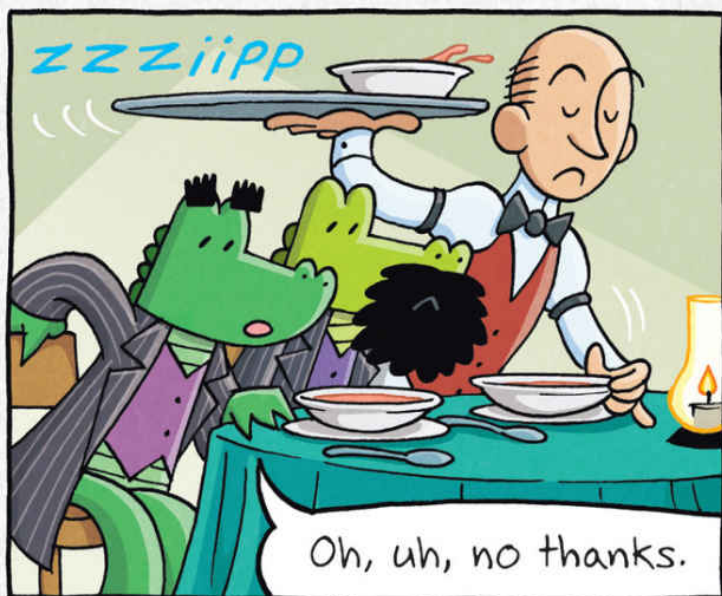


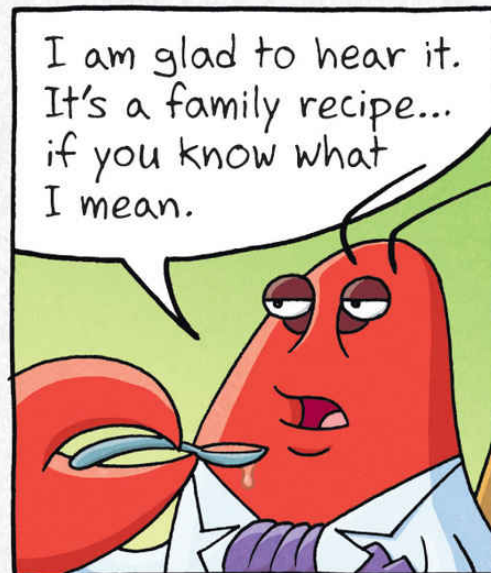






You must be Mikey Eyebrows and Vinnie Beardface.
Have a seat. Break bread with me.

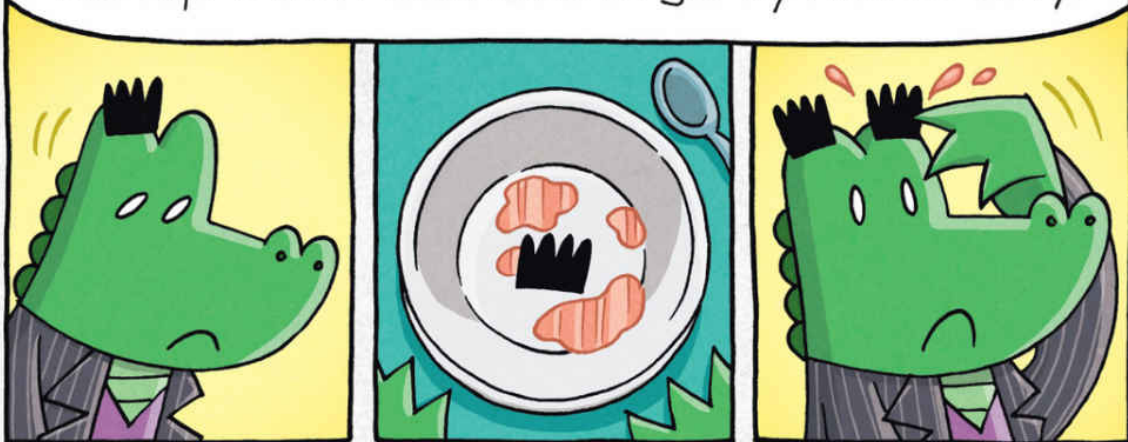




With that giant gator's gaze scaring crime out of the streets and into **Any Fin Goes**, I get a cut of *EVERY CRIME IN THE CITY!*



I had influence before, but that robot has really given a **bottom-feeder** like me a chance to rise to the top! I don't even have to get my *PINCERS* dirty.

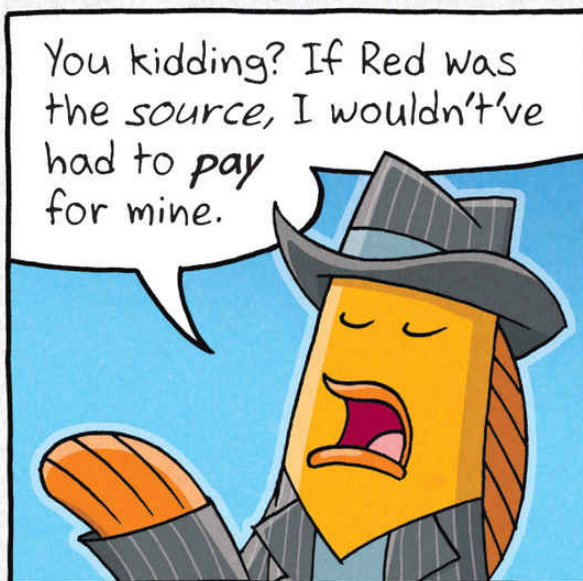
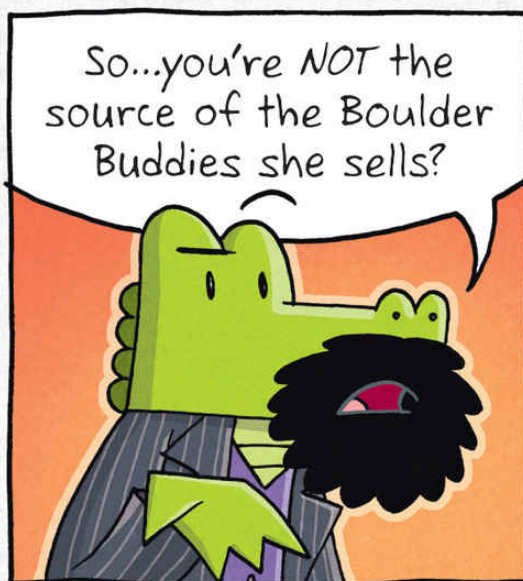
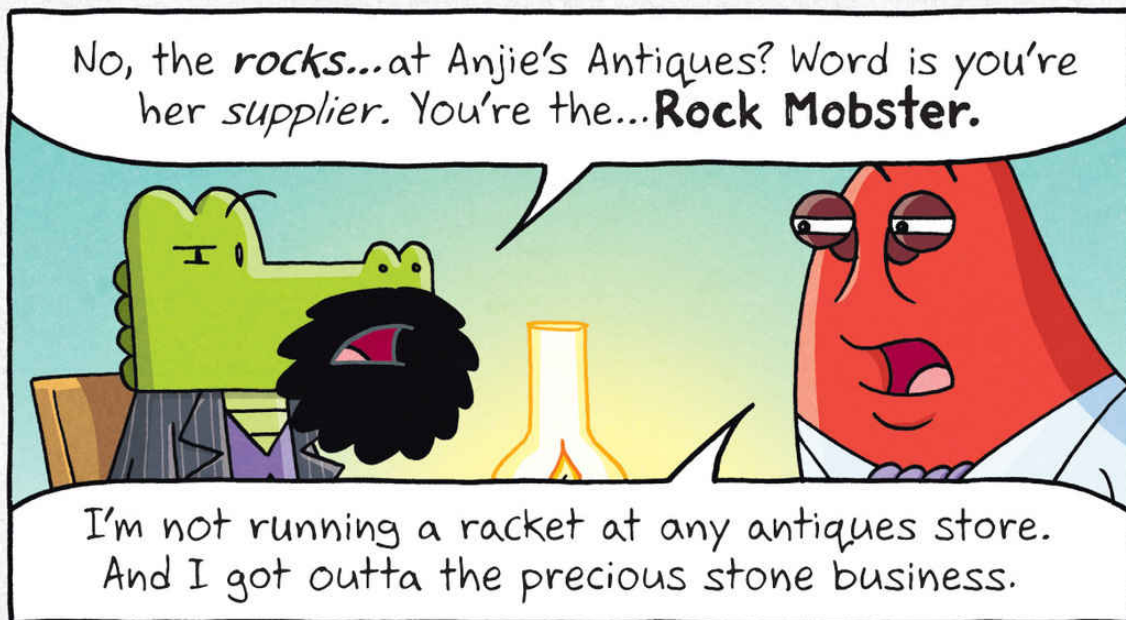


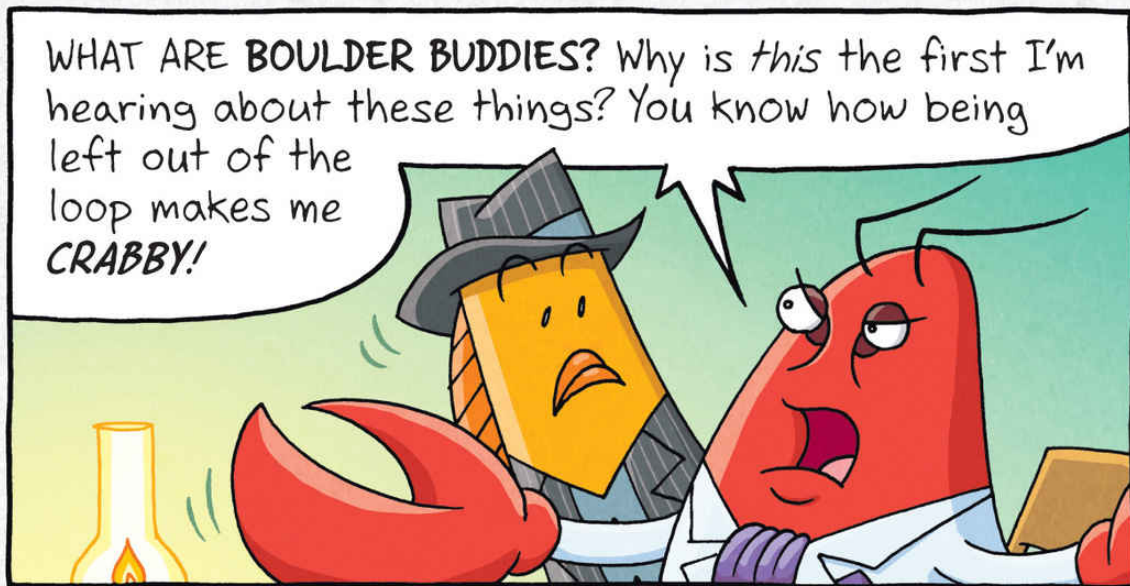
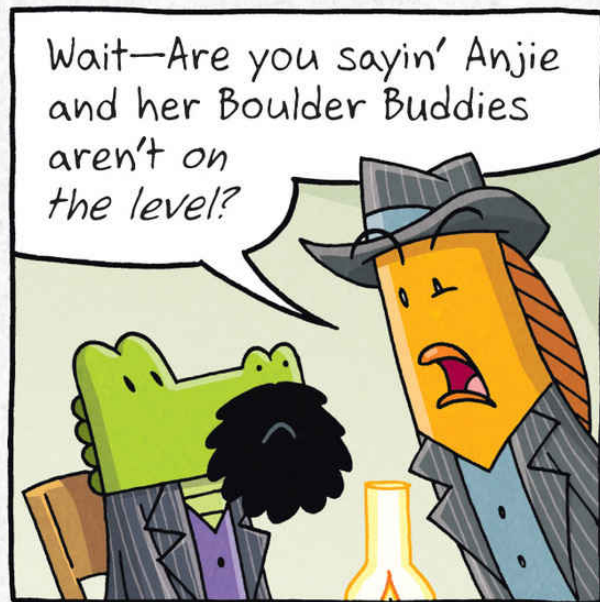
Now Red's got *OTHER* people to do his really dirty work!



So. What's this business you're proposing? And not to sound *shellfish*, but what's in it for me?







Look, you goof-a-balls want a seat at the table, you gotta prove yourselves first. Find out whoever's mooching off my surf and turf and make 'em *PAY UP*.

NOBODY pulls off a job in this town without **RED MOBSTER** gettin' a piece of the action!



Just to be clear... You *don't* know where Anjie is?

I don't know *WHO* Anjie is! What are you, some sorta interrogator? Get outta heeeere!



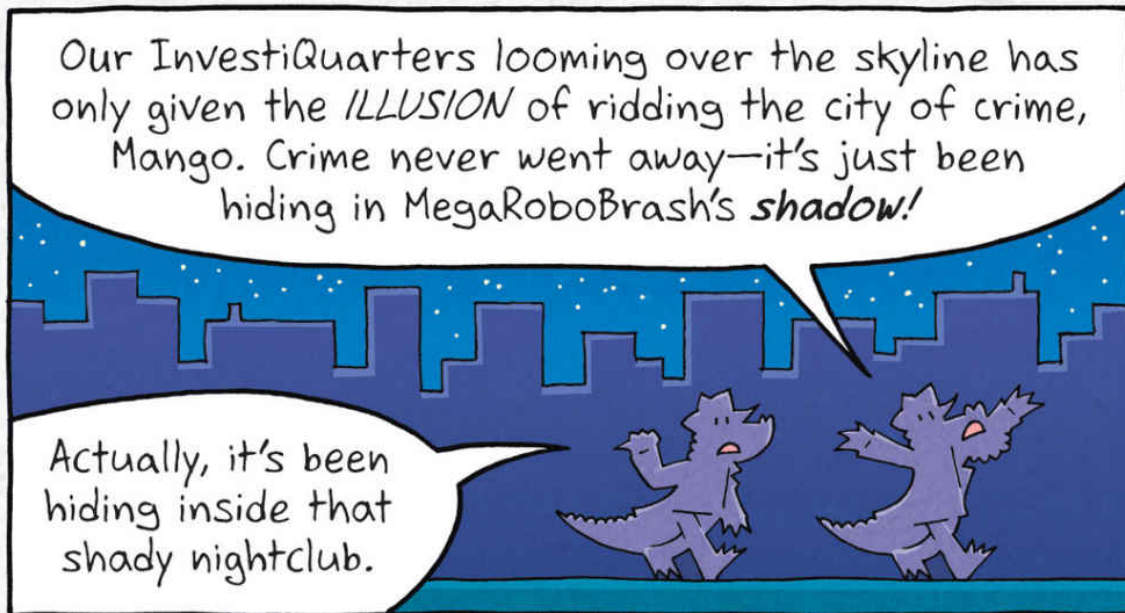
Don't worry, we're on the case!

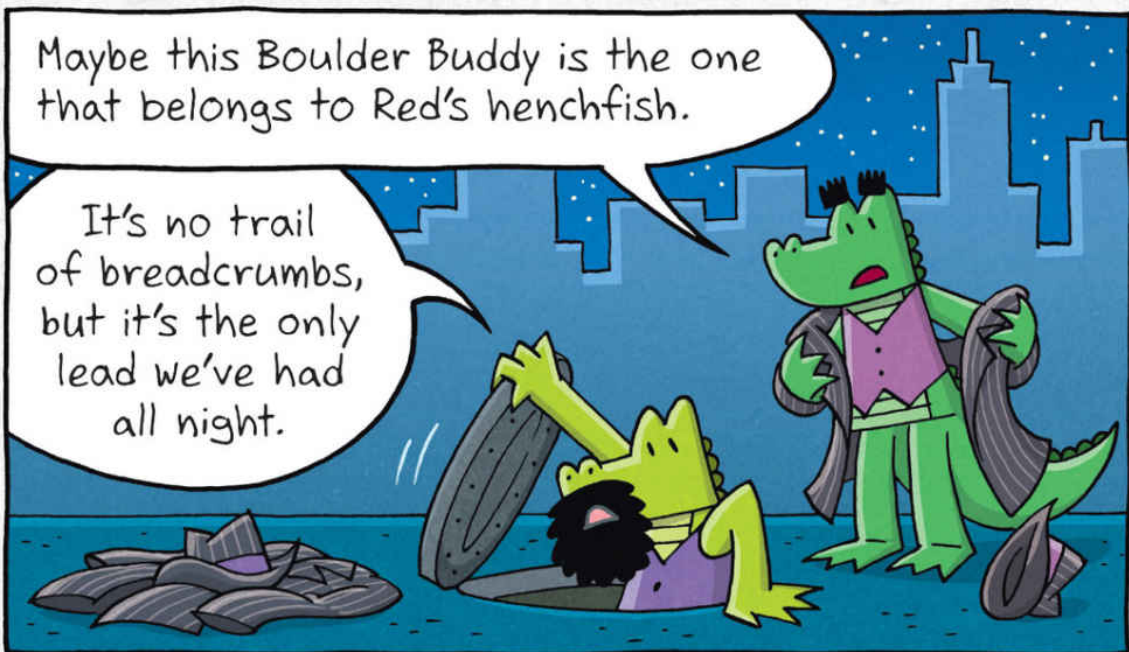
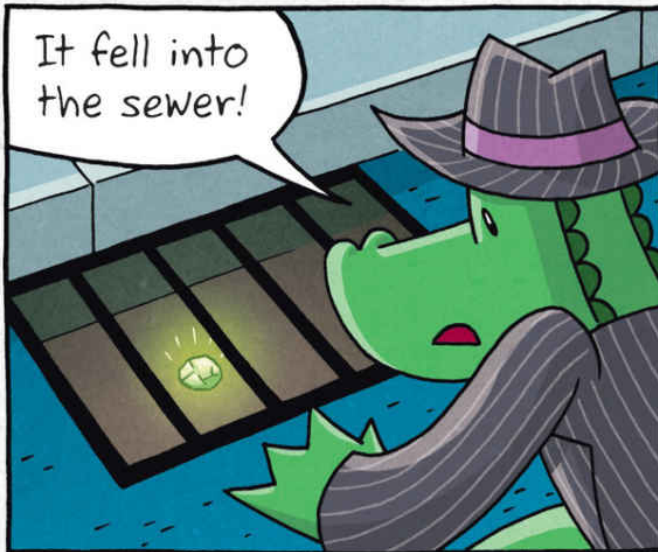
Come on, Vinnie Brashface—I MEAN, **Beardface**!

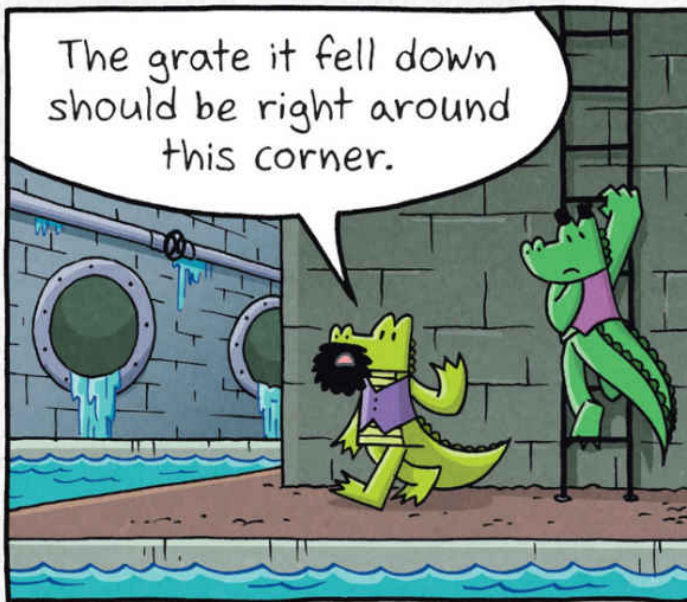




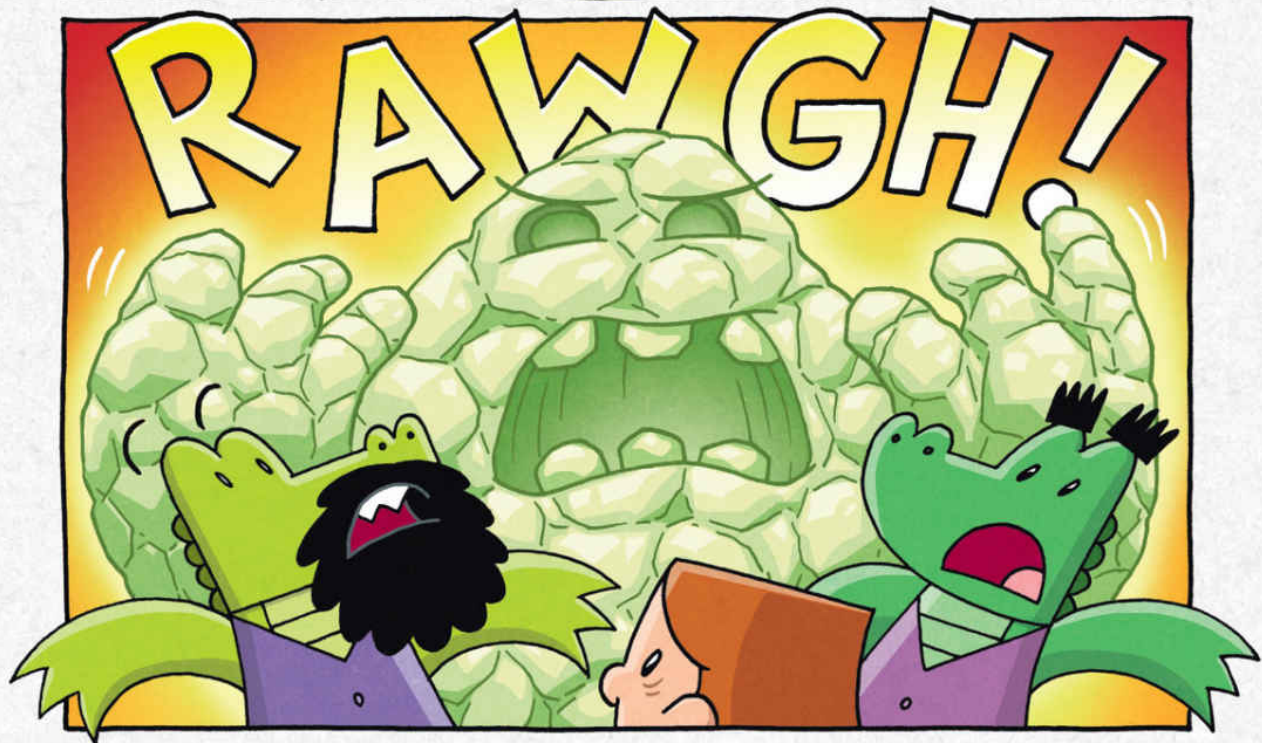
Chapter 9

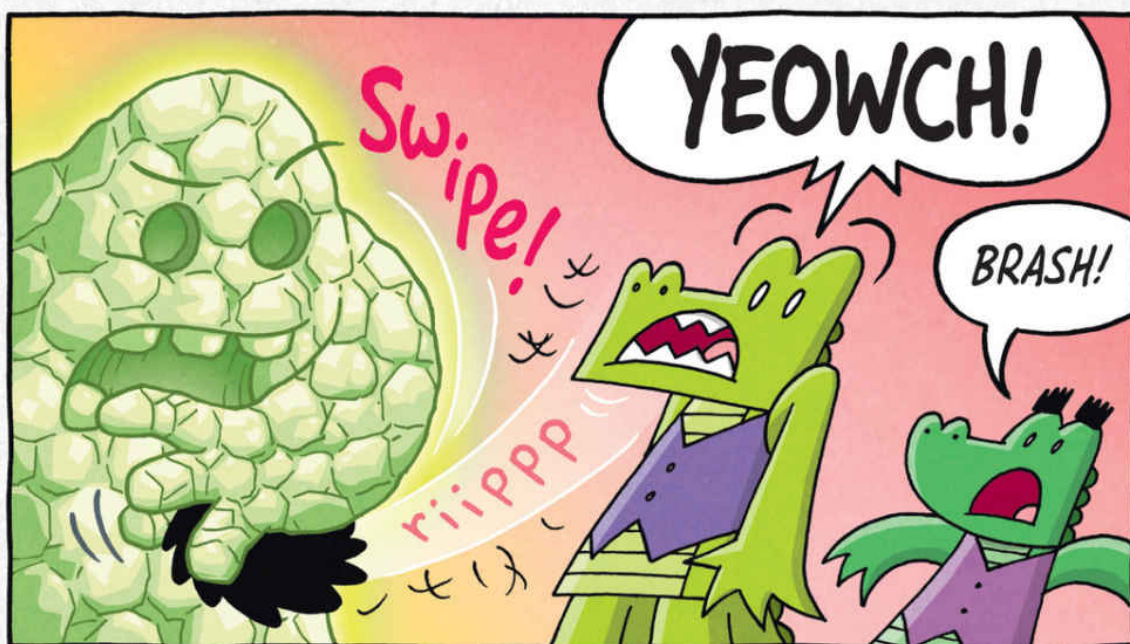
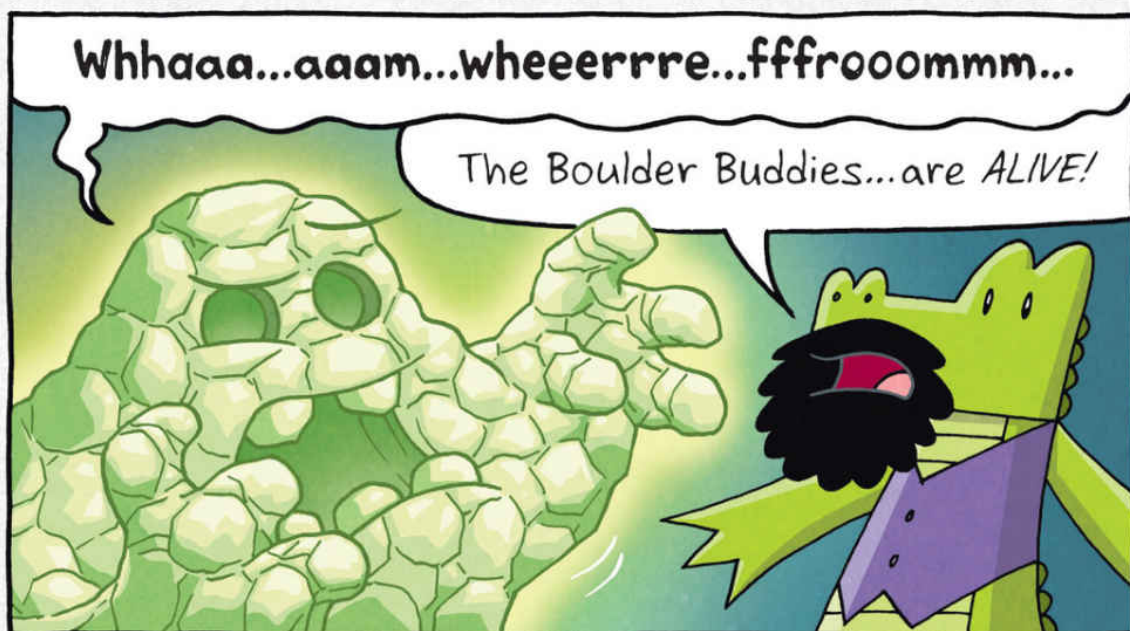
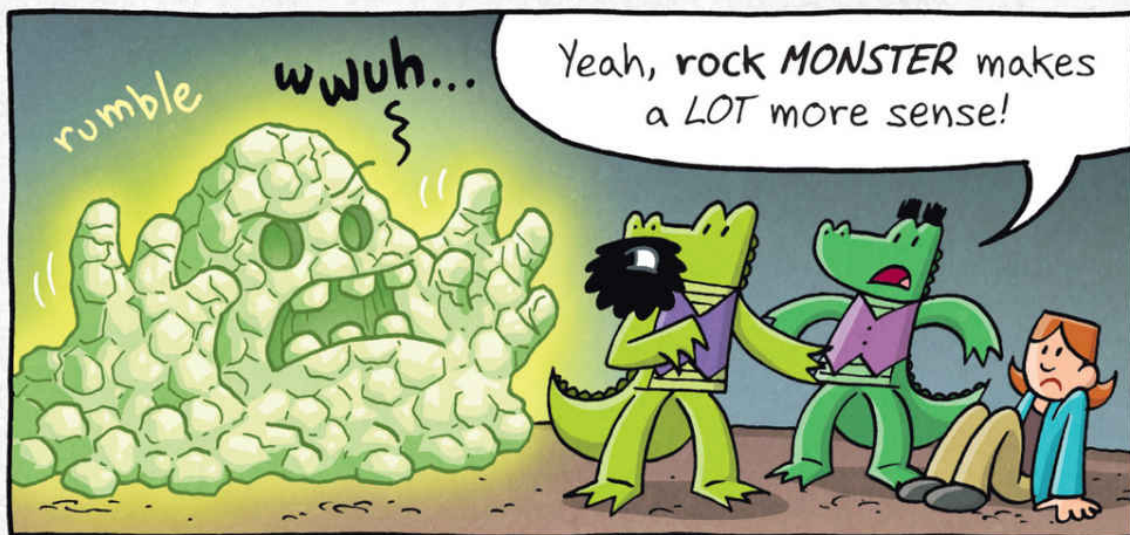


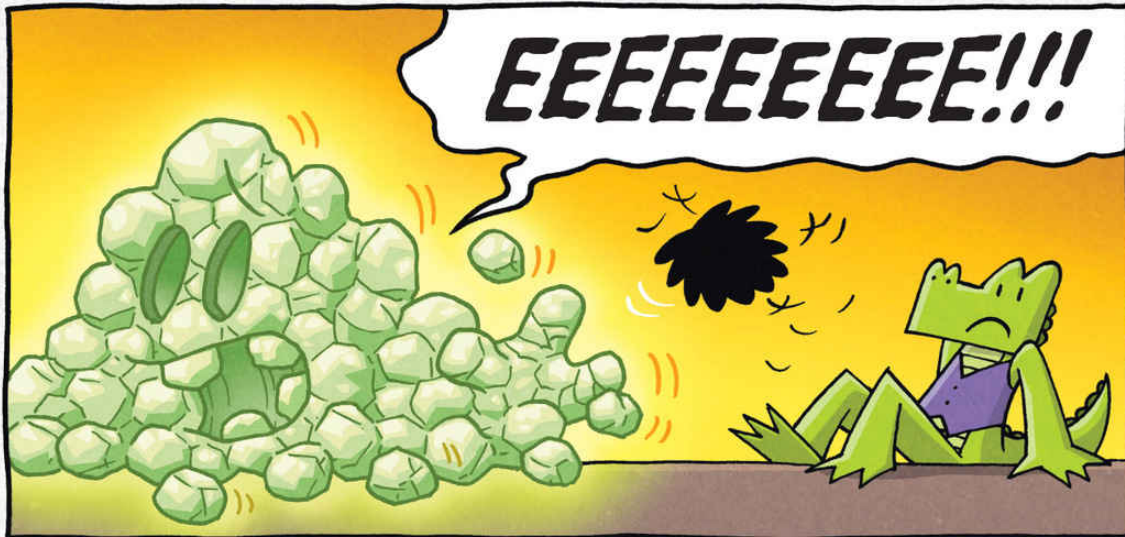
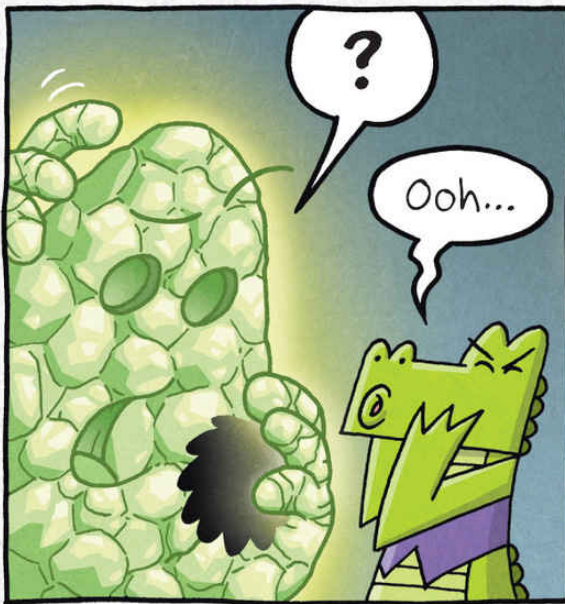


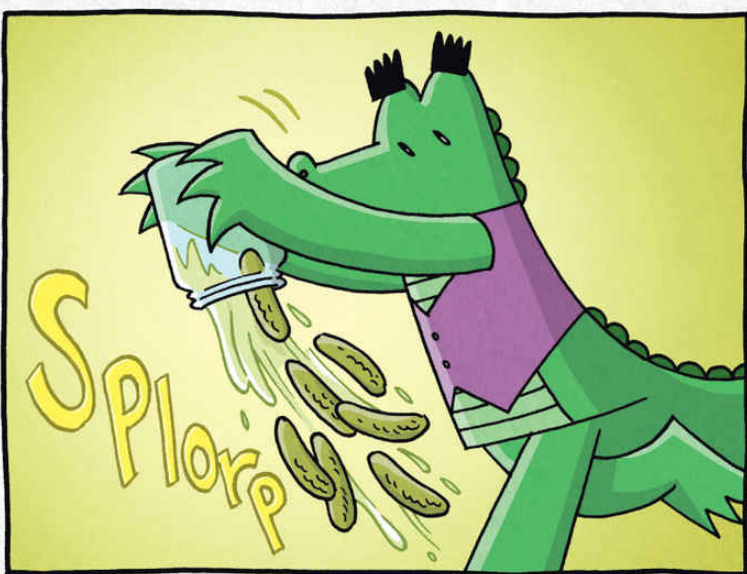


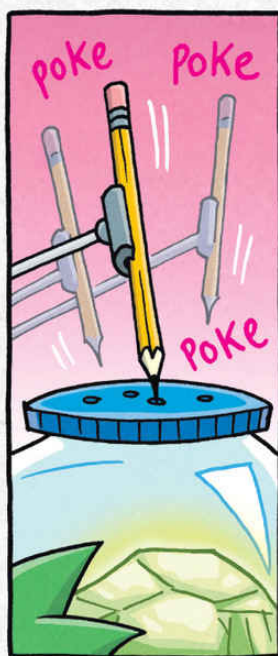


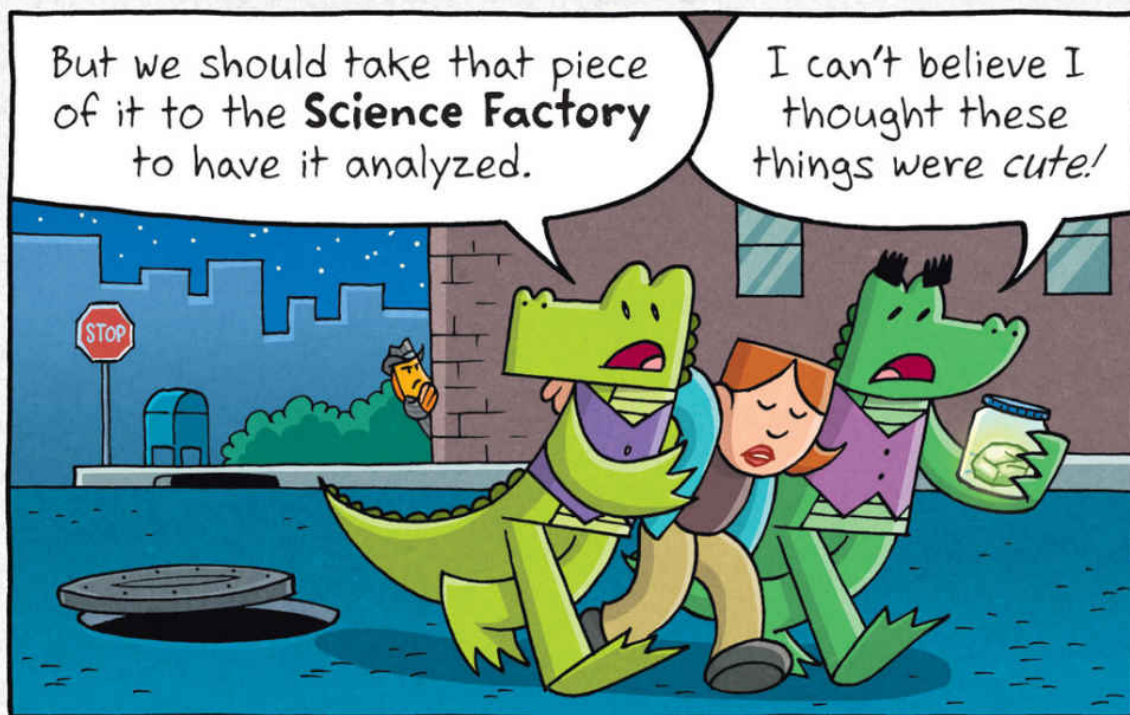






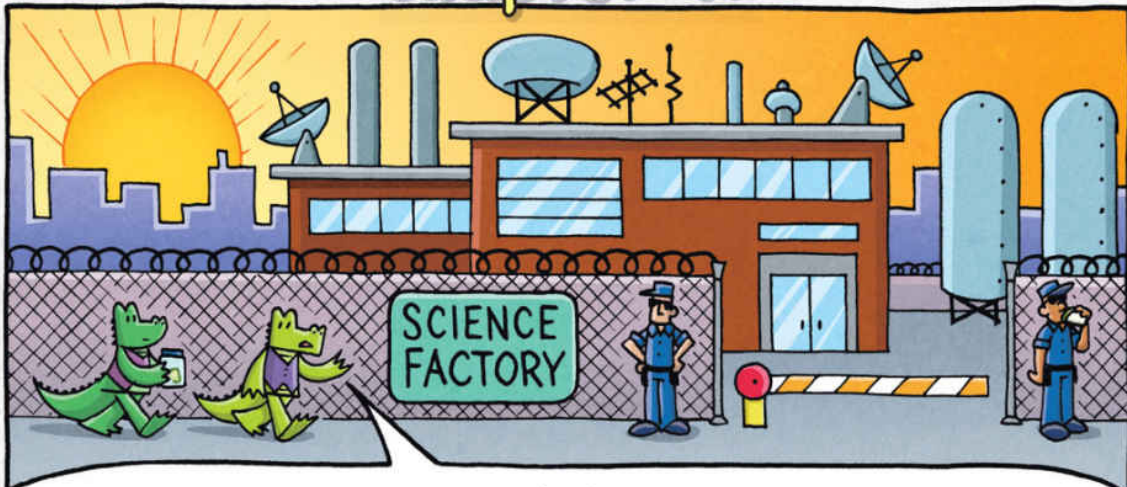




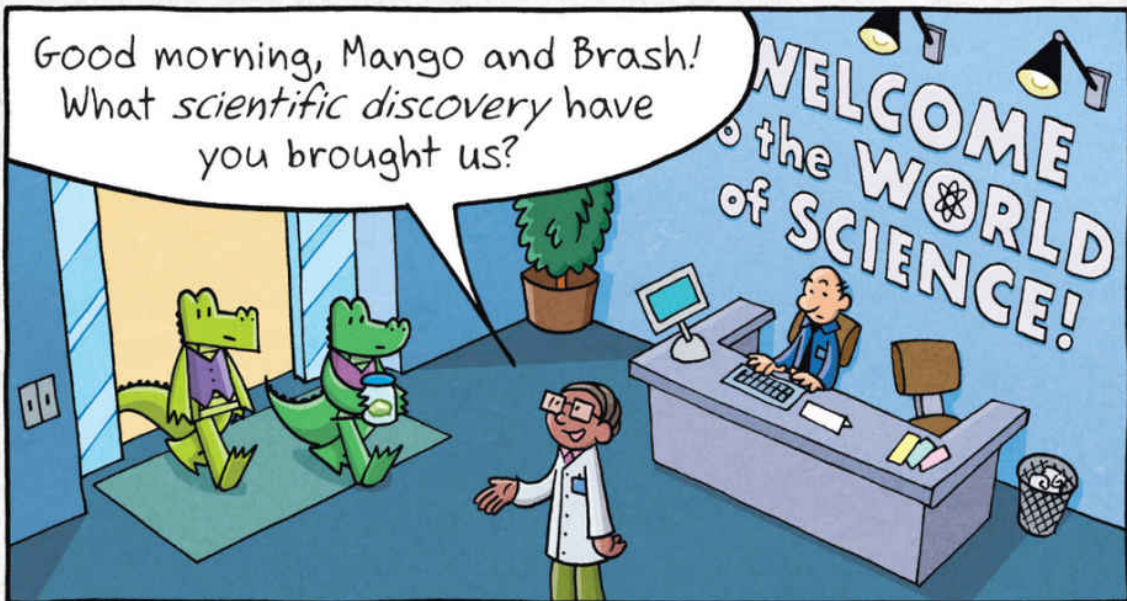




Chapter 10



Surely the **Head Scientist** will be able to tell us what this rock *ACTUALLY IS* and *WHERE* it came from.



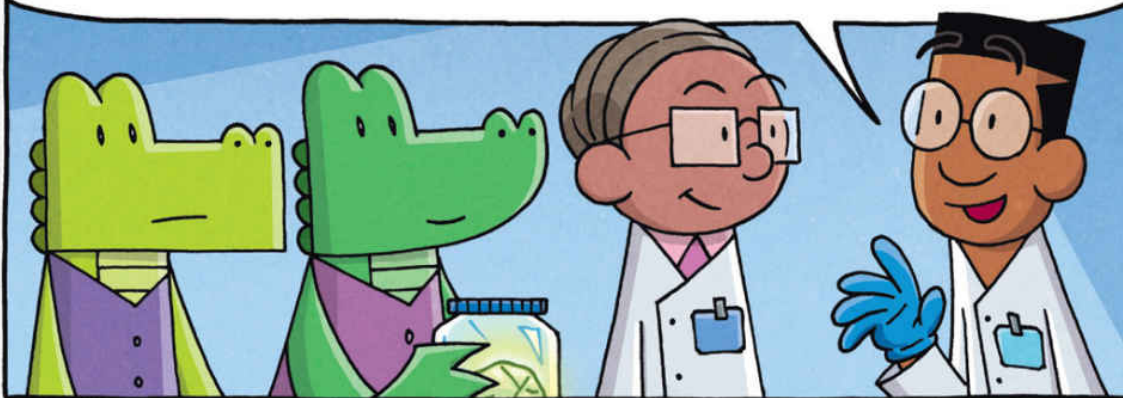
Good morning, Mango and Brash!
What *scientific discovery* have you brought us?

Have you heard of **Boulder Buddies**?
It turns out they're pieces of a much larger **ROCK MONSTER**!

FASCINATING!
Let's get it to the **Rock Lab**.



Hi, I'm Dr. Richter. I'm the resident **GEOLOGIST**, or **rock doctor**, so don't take my expertise for granite!

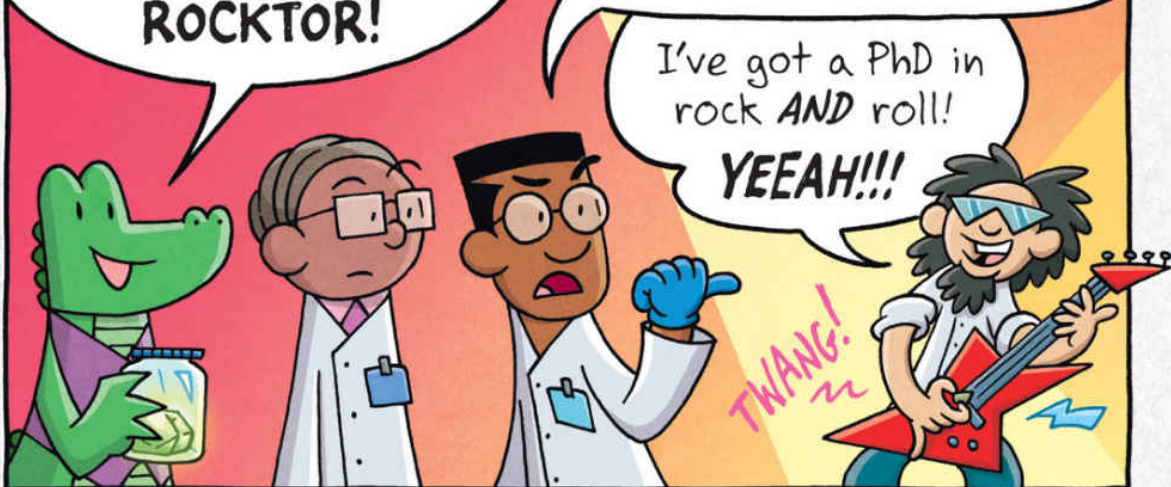


Rock doctor? HA! They should call you the **ROCKTOR!**

I *WISH*. That's what we call the rock **MUSIC** doctor.

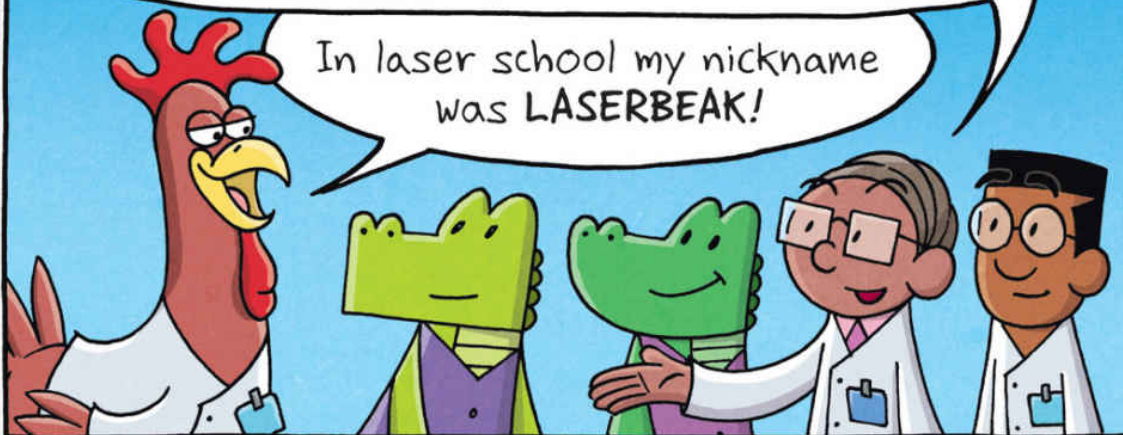
I've got a PhD in rock **AND** roll!

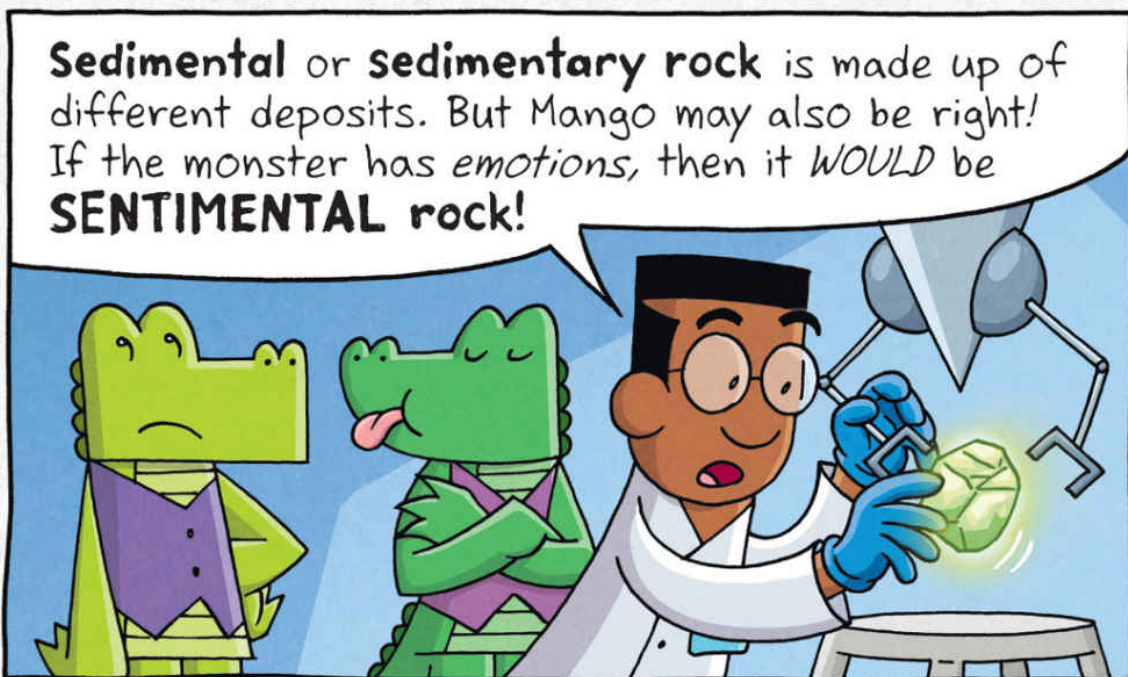
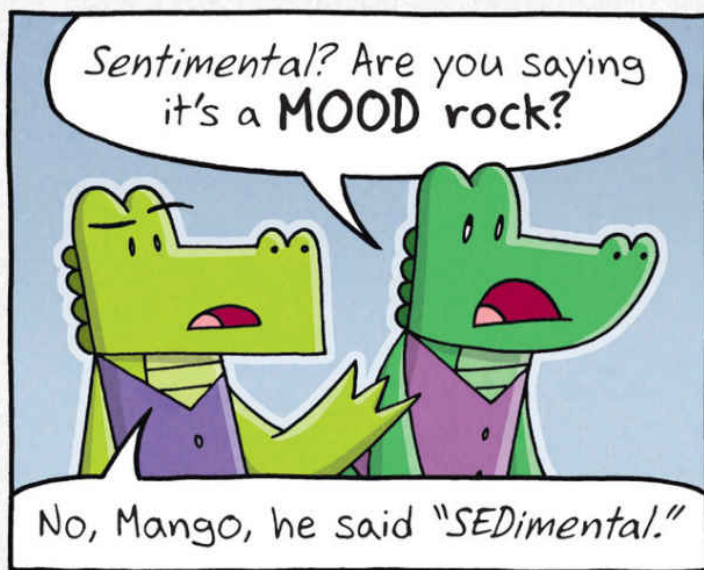
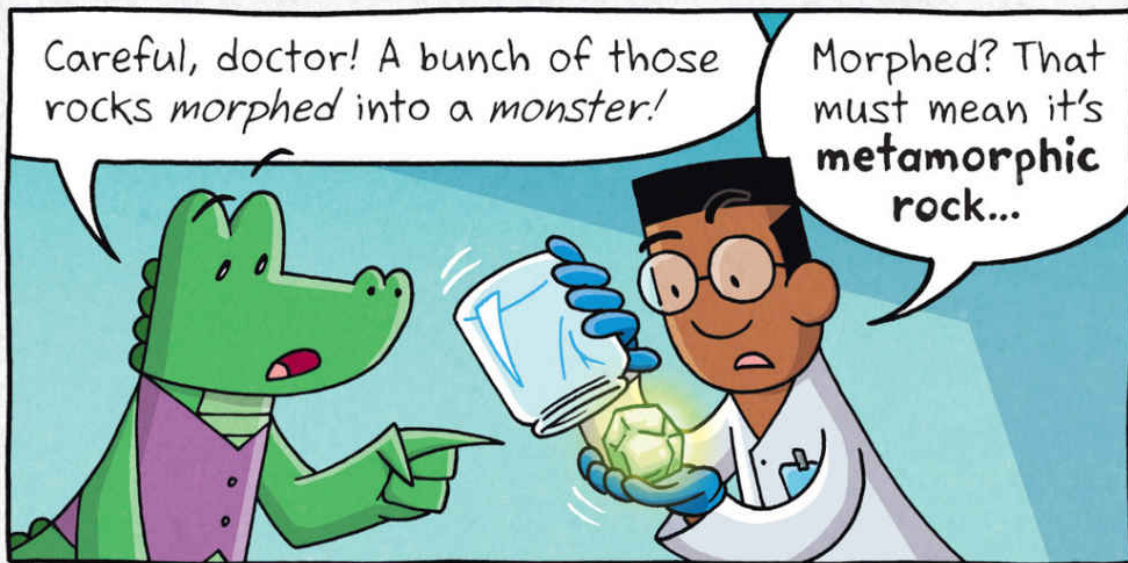
YEEAH!!!

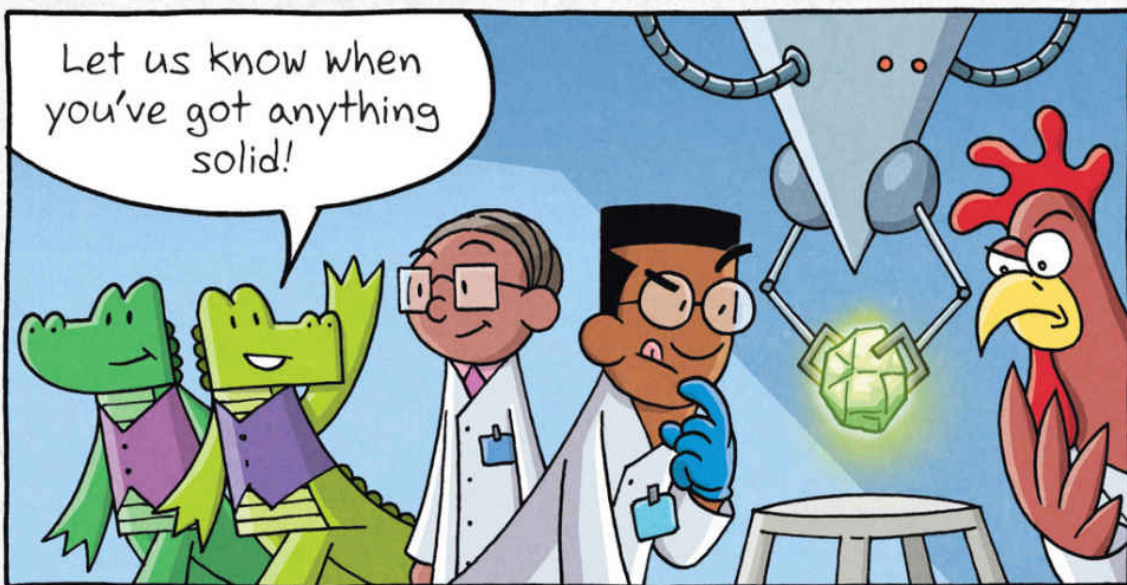
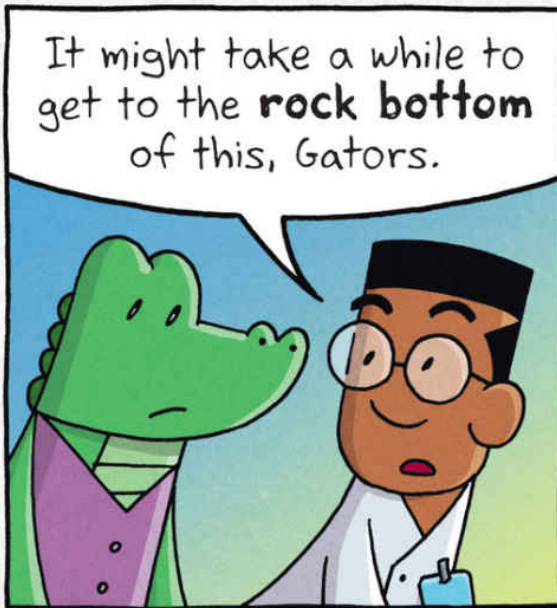


You of course already know Dr. Doodledoo. He specializes in **Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation—LASERS!**

In laser school my nickname was **LASERBEAK!**





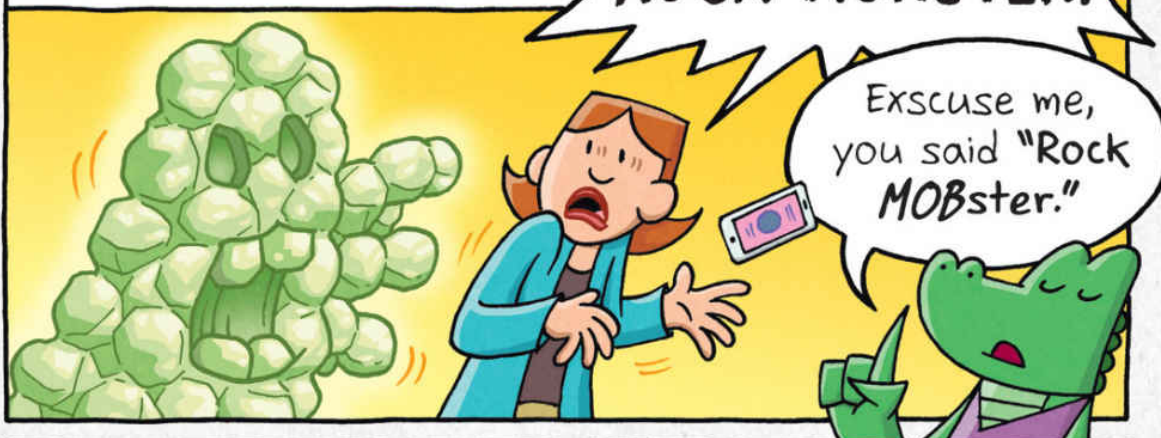






I was on the phone with my mom when I was startled b-by this—

ROCK MONSTER!



My nose was just stuffy from allergies! HONEST!
I d-don't know anything about any *mobsters*!

Just making sure! We went on a *wild* goose chase. And by *GOOSE*, I mean *LOBSTER*!

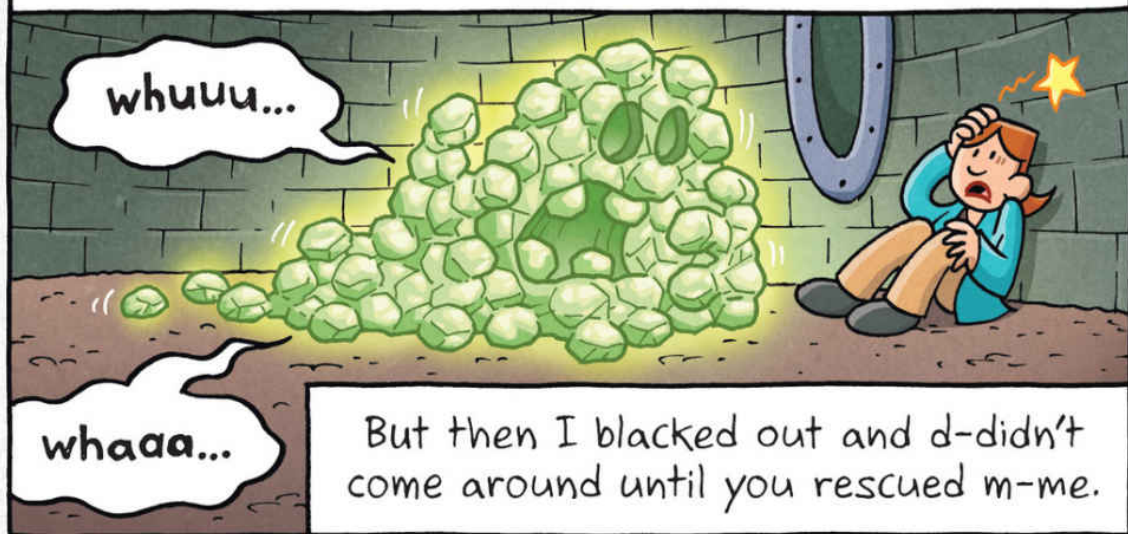


The **Boulder Buddies** had come back to the store...and come to *life*! They grabbed me and c-carried me off into the sewer!





I must've hit my head, because I'd swear the r-rocks were trying to *TALK* to me!



whuuu...

whaaa...

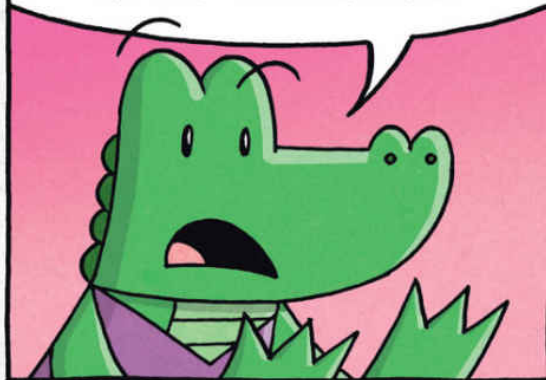
But then I blacked out and d-didn't come around until you rescued m-me.

Anjie, how many Boulder Buddies have you sold?

I don't know. I—I wasn't keeping count.



You didn't **number** them? Don't you know *ANYTHING* about collectibles?



N-no, I don't! I confess! I'm a *FRAUD*! My antiques, the Boulder Buddies...

It's all just **JUNK** I find!





I n-never expected **Boulder Buddies** would be so popular. But I expected even less that they'd come back to get **REVENGE** for being **CHOPPED TO B-BITS!**



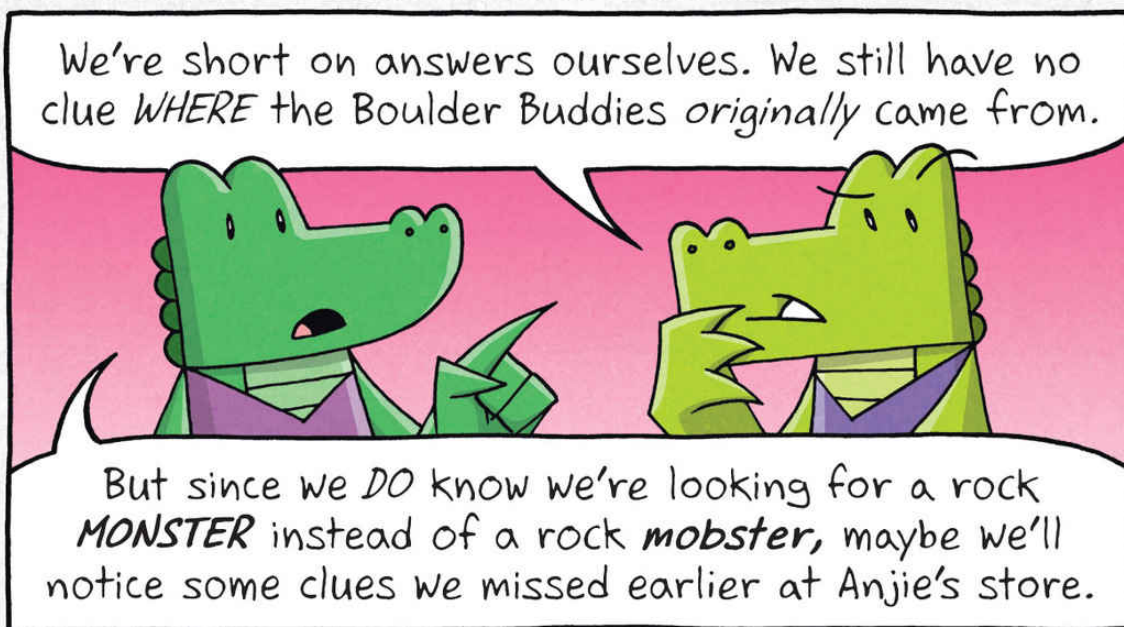
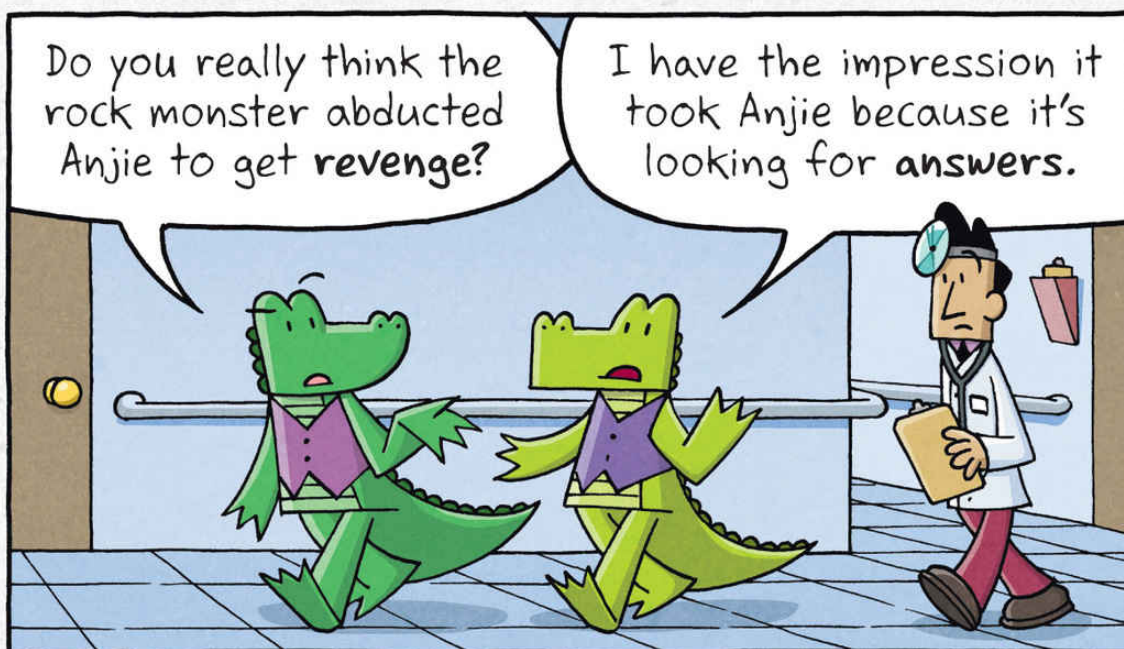
Anjie, tell us *where!*
WHERE did you find
them...?!

The same place I find all my
merchandise... But, **NO! NO!**
I won't go back there!
The horror! THE HORROR!!!



Enough! No more questions. Anjie needs to rest!





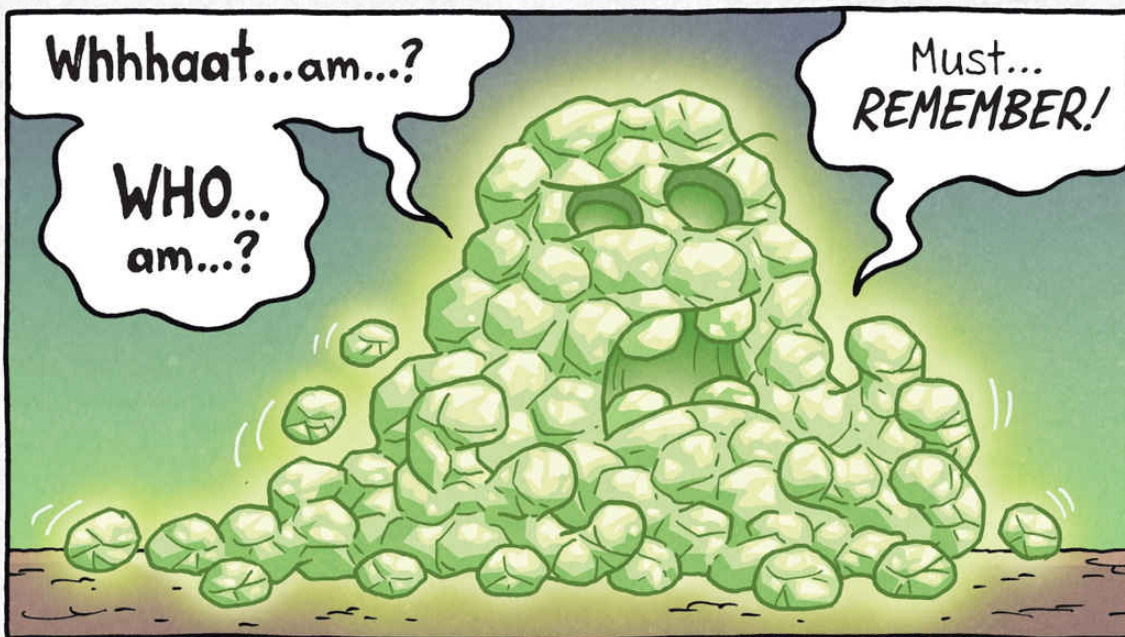
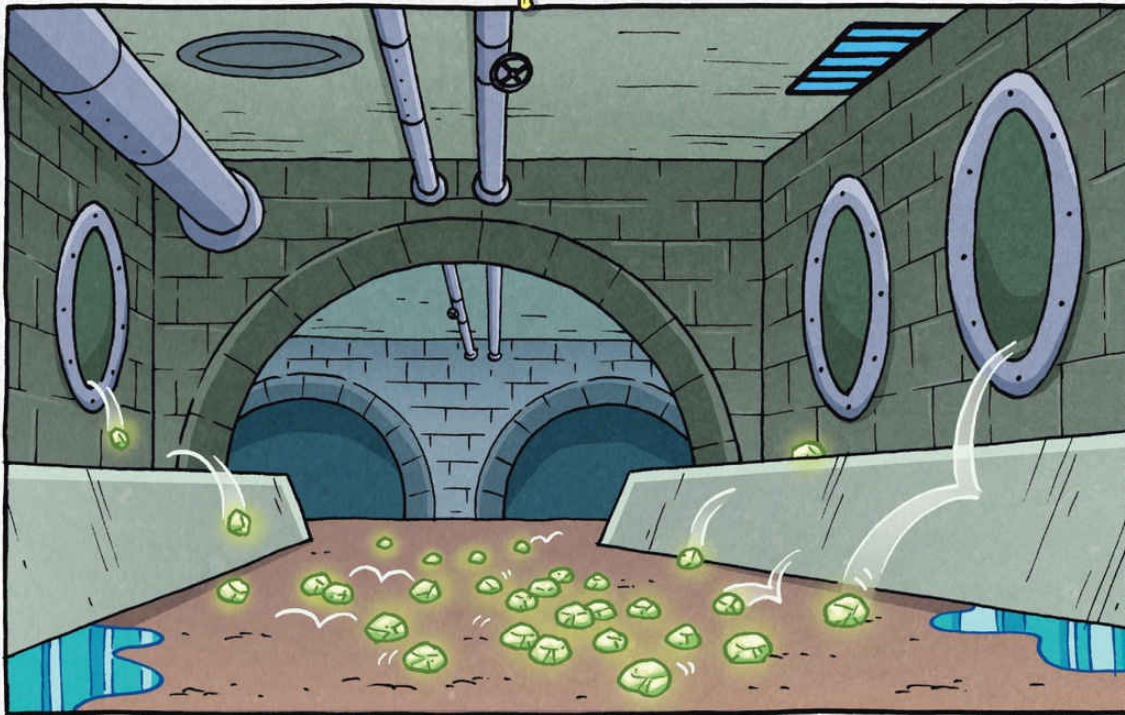


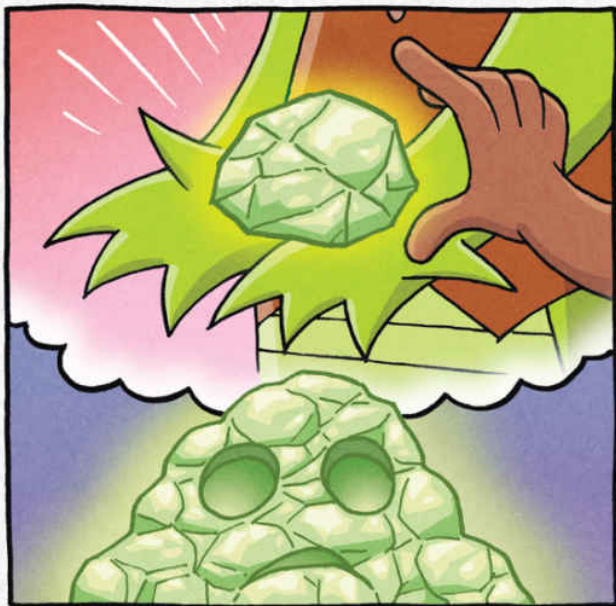
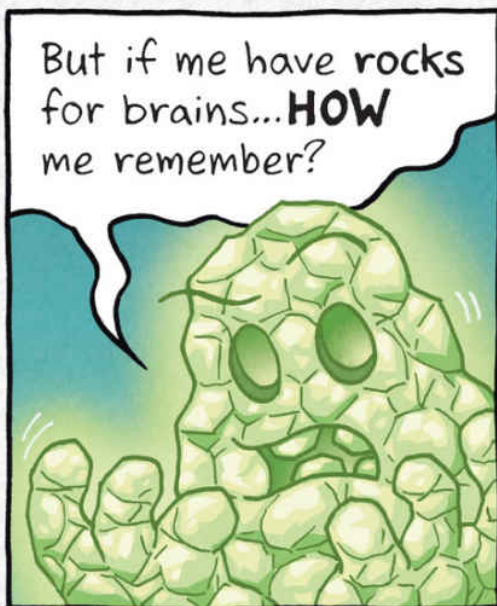
DR. HARBONES! I know you're *tempted*, but whatever you do, do **NOT** transform into the *Action News Now* helicopter in the sky to report that everyone's **Boulder Buddies** are part of a **ROCK MONSTER** that could **ATTACK** them at **ANY MOMENT!**

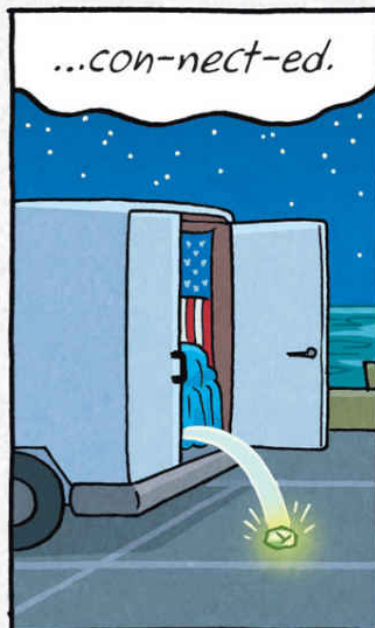
That kind of *sensationalized yet highly entertaining journalism* could cause a **PANIC!**

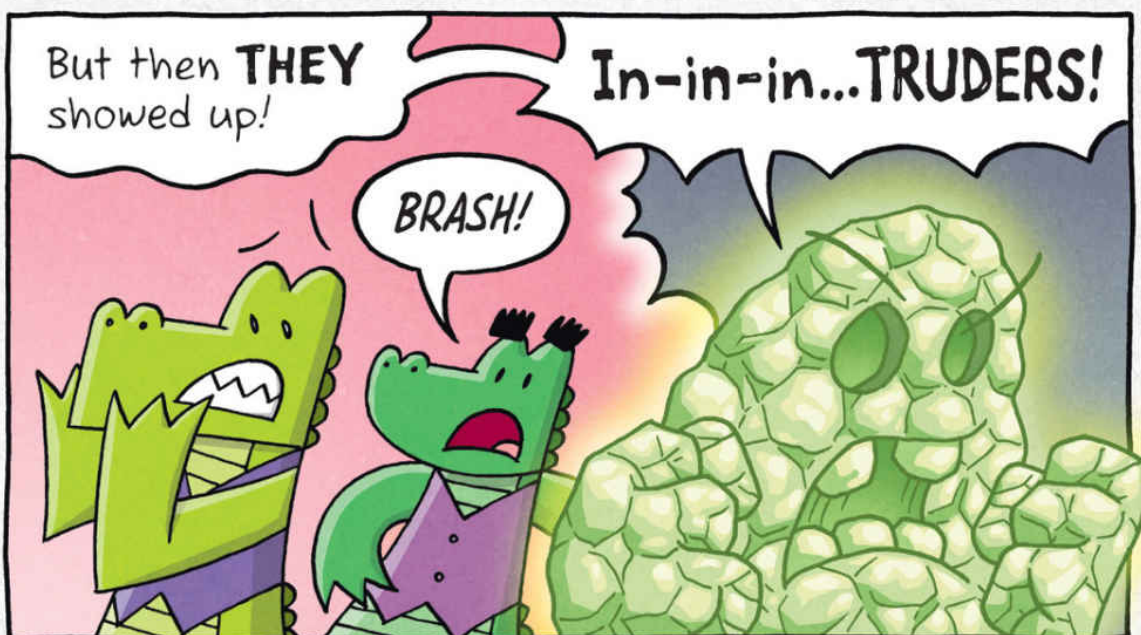
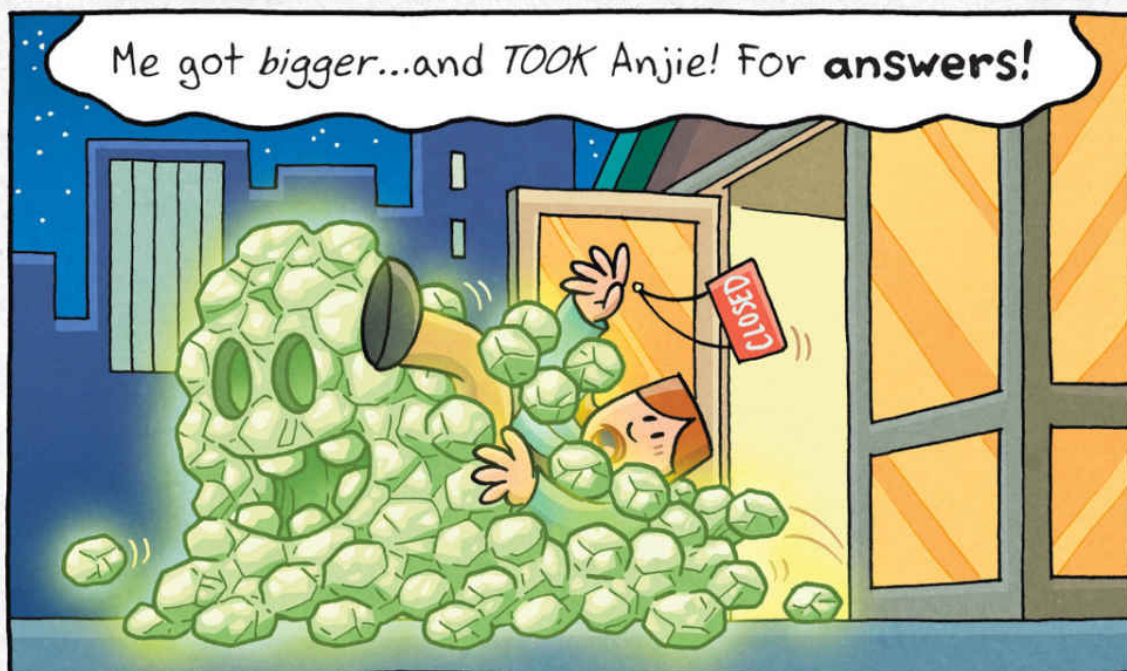


Chapter 11

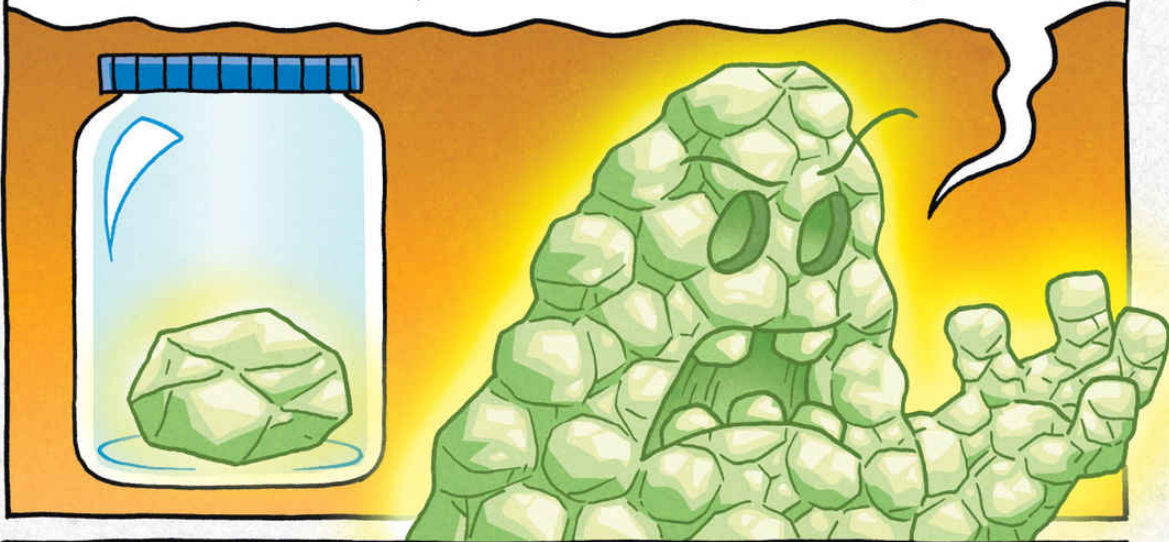




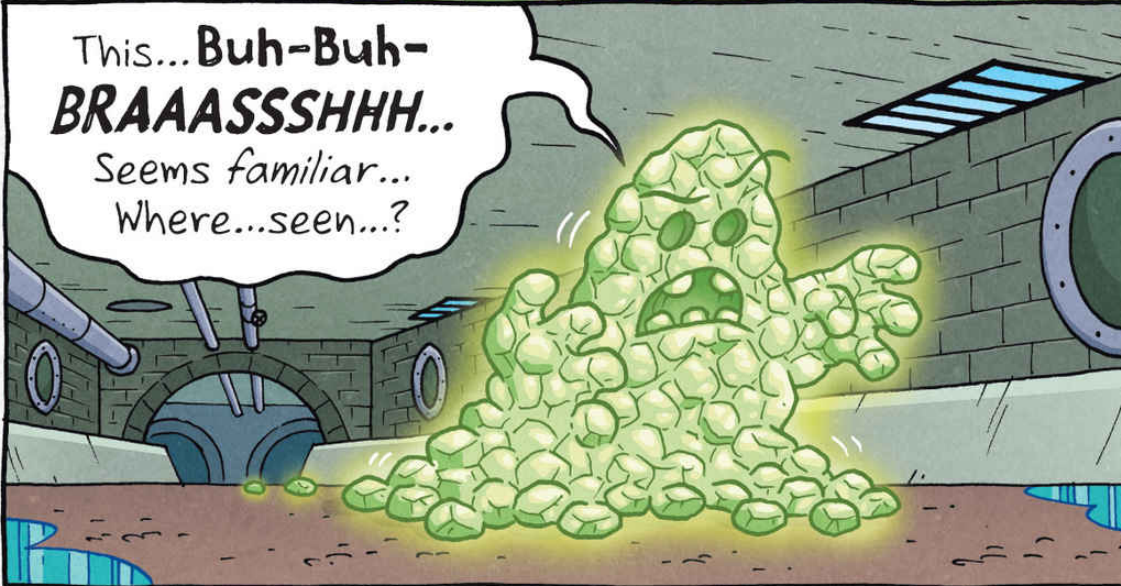




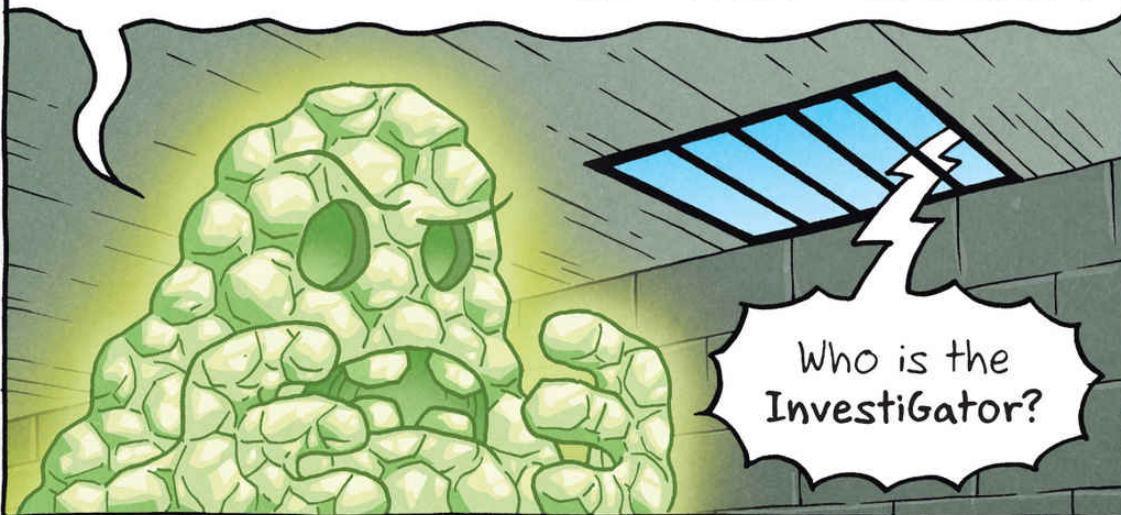
Came...and *TOOK*...piece of me! Now, me in pickle...



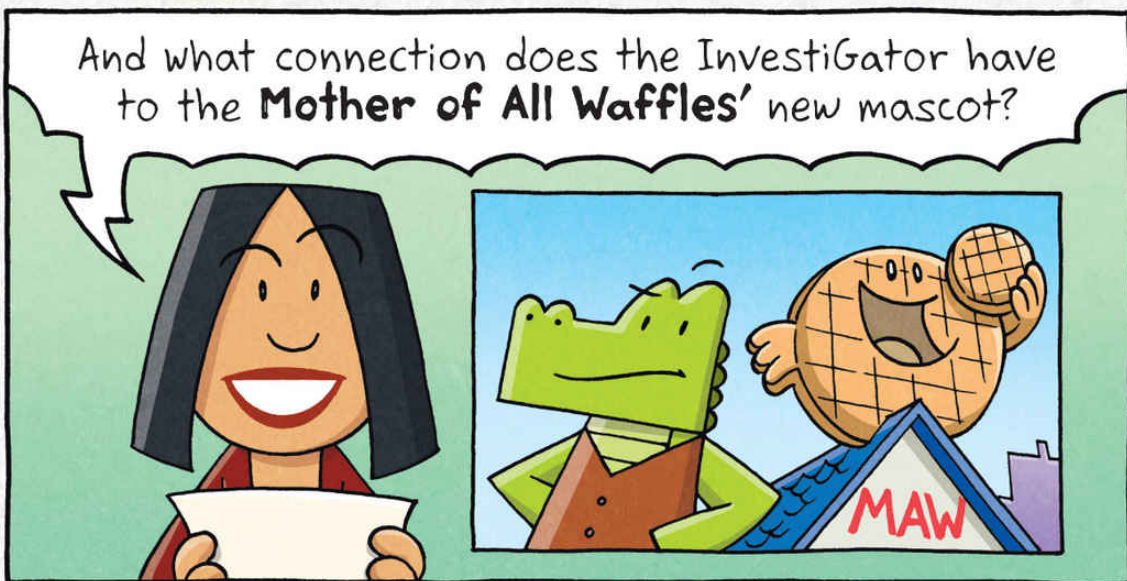
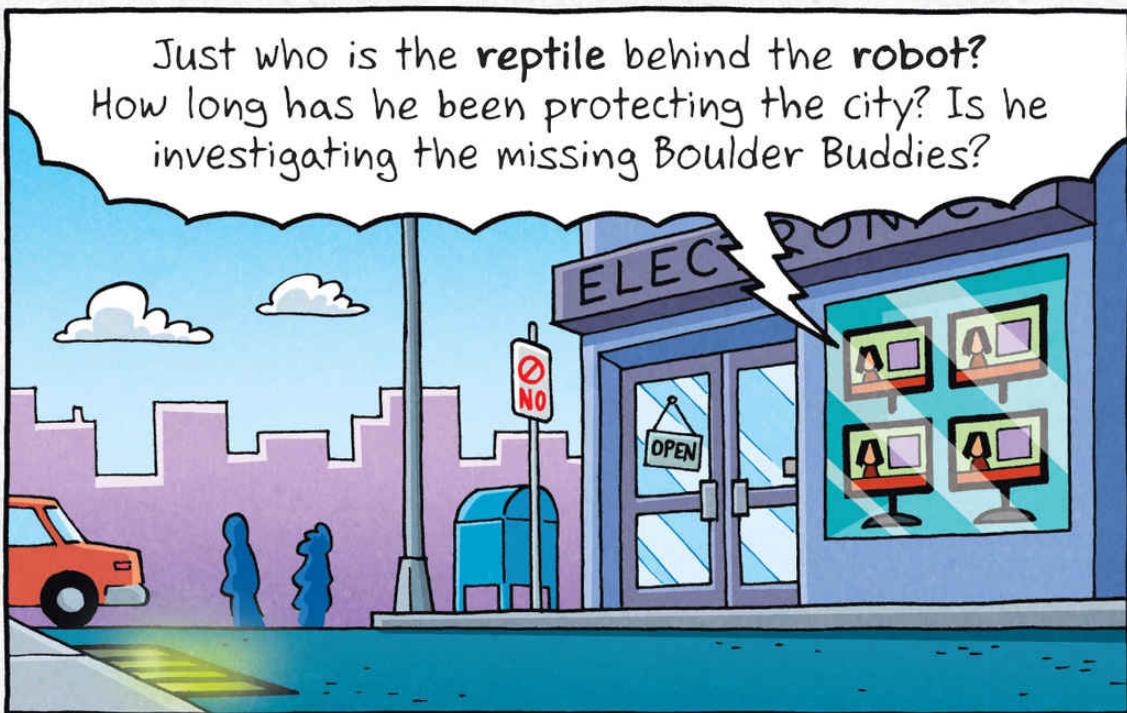
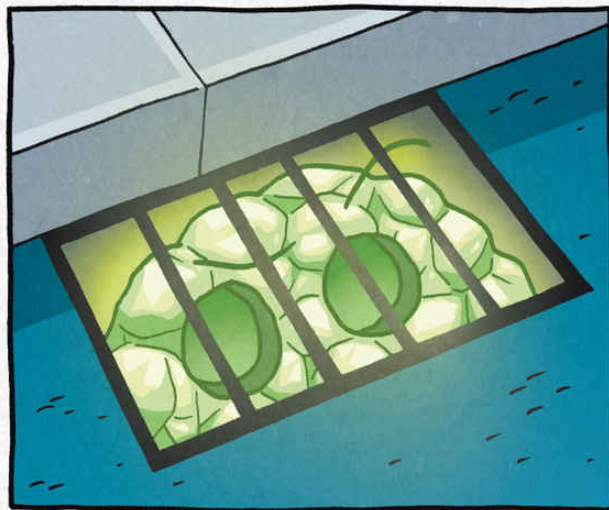
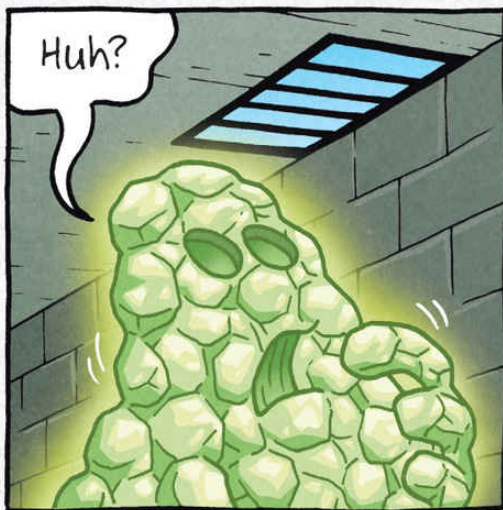
This...Buh-Buh-
BRAAASSSHH...
Seems familiar...
Where...seen...?



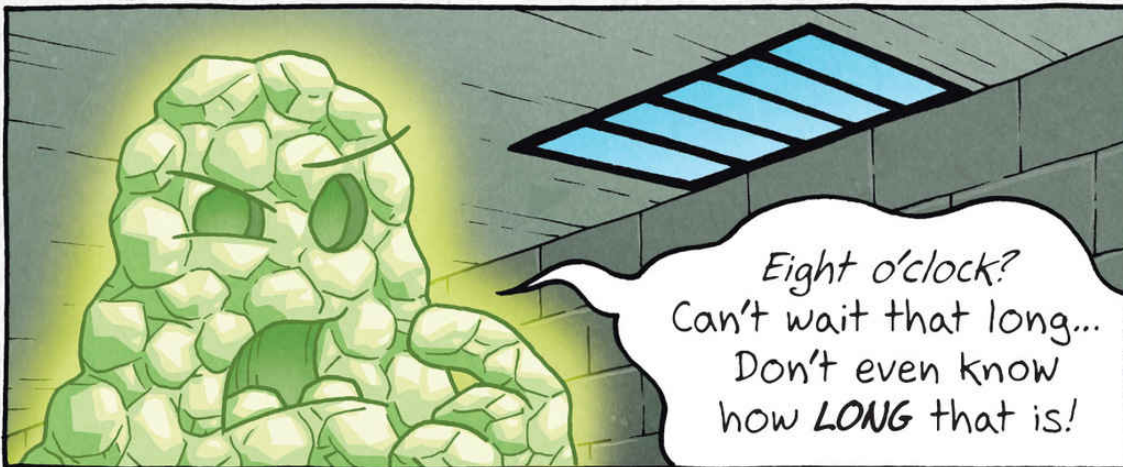
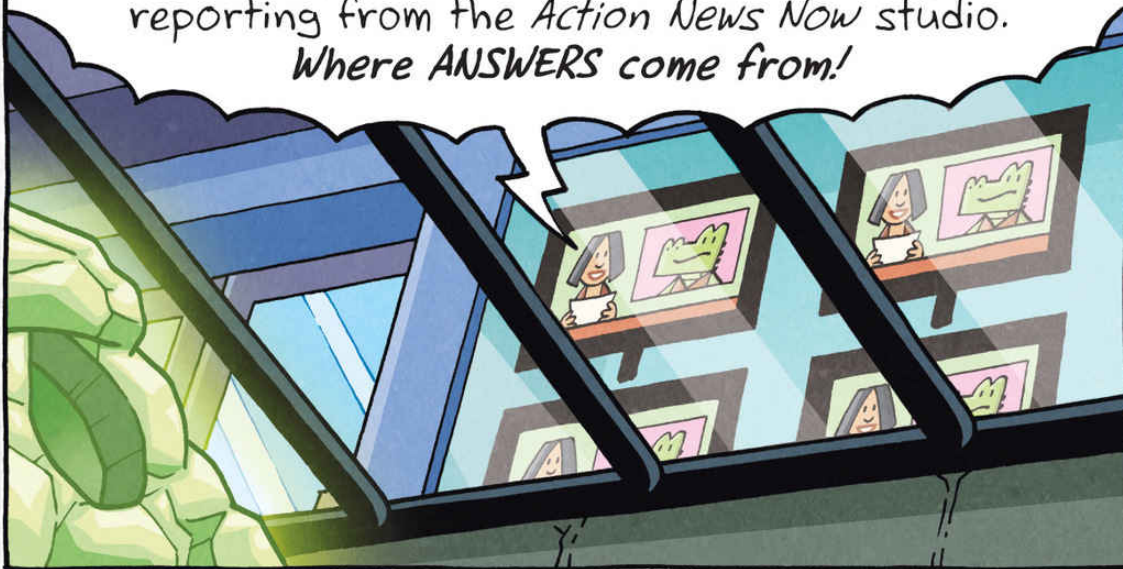
Need **ANSWERS!** Who is the **IN-VEST-GATOR...?**



Who is the
InvestiGator?

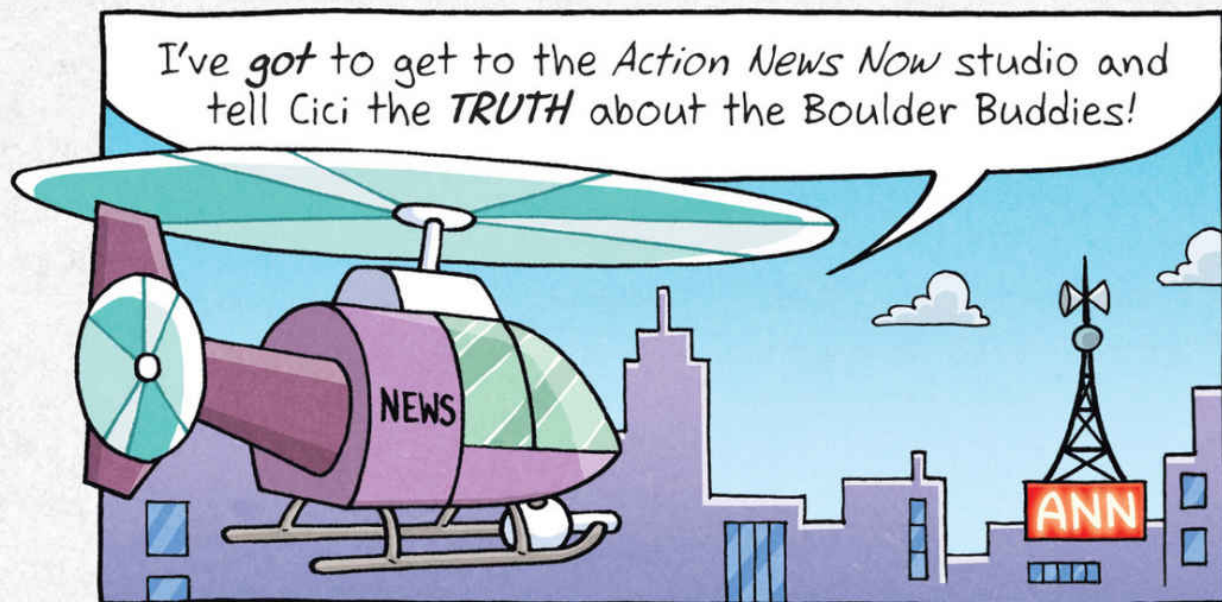
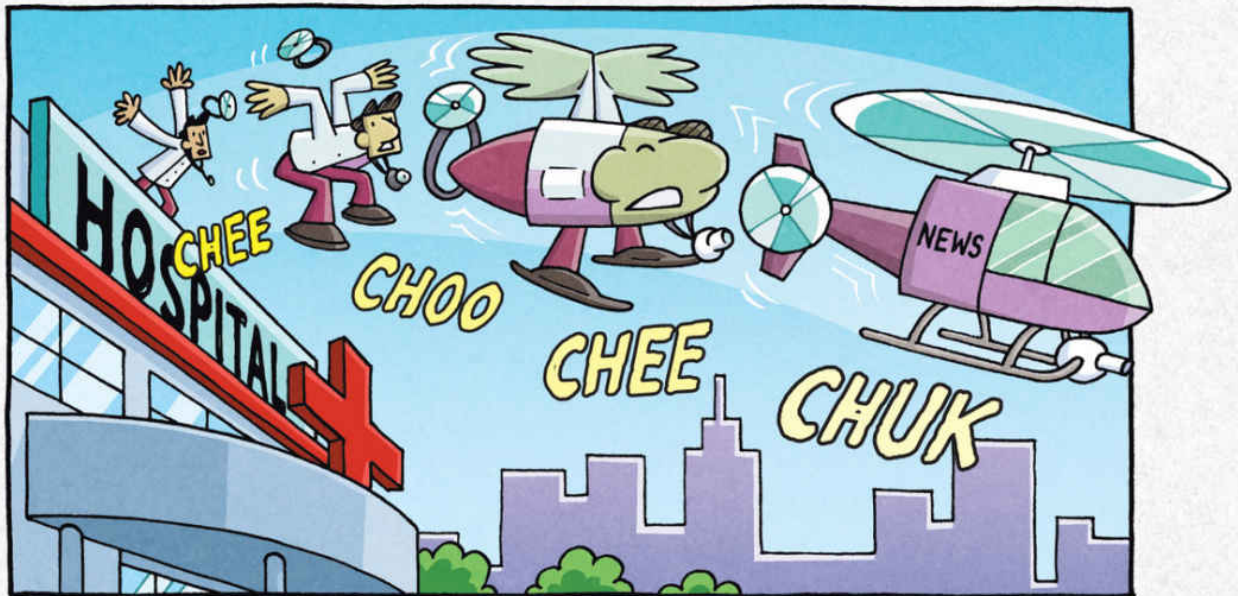
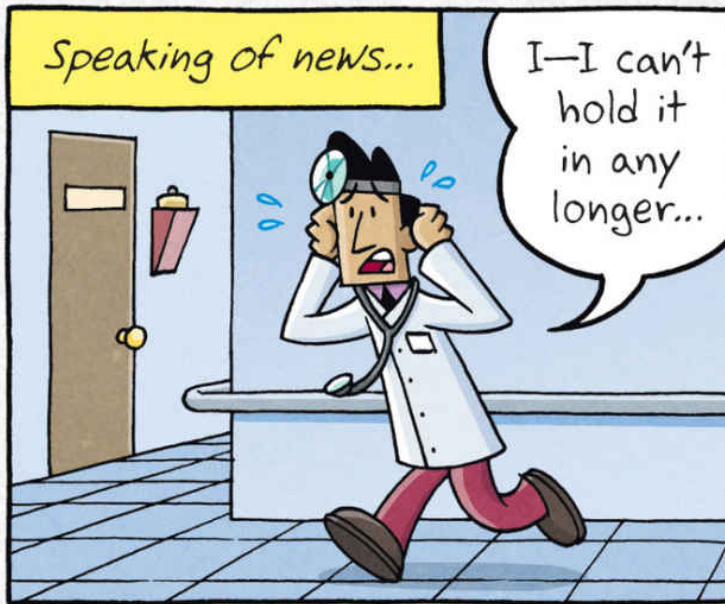


For the answers to these questions and more,
watch my *exclusive exposé* on the Investigator
TONIGHT at 8 p.m.! Until then, I'm Cici Boringstories,
reporting from the *Action News Now* studio.
Where ANSWERS come from!

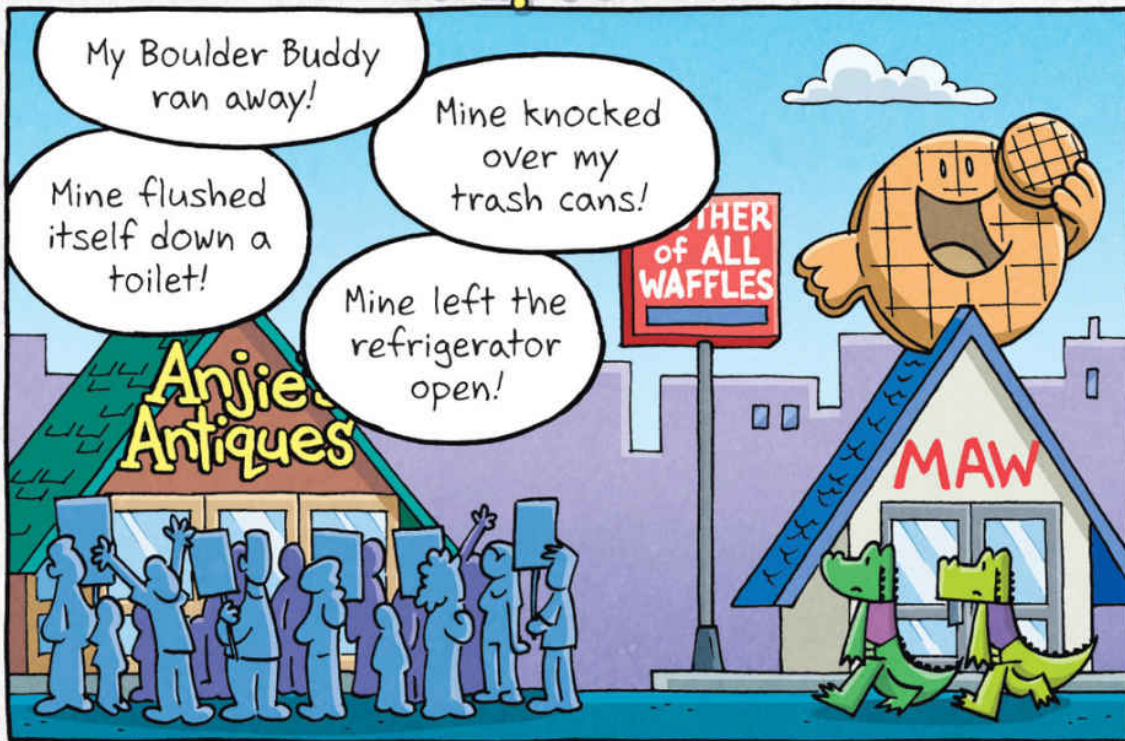


Need answers NOW!



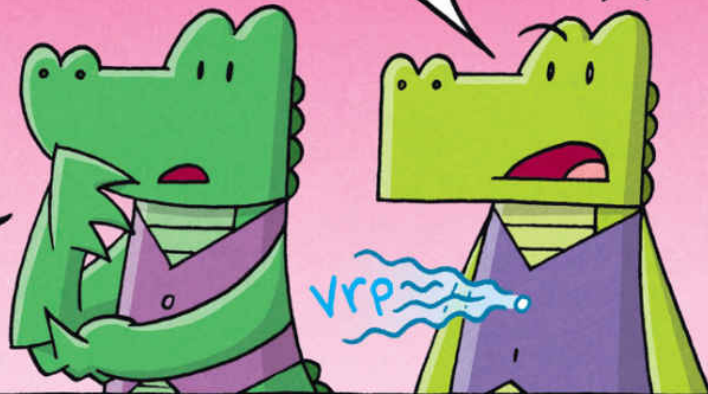


Chapter 12



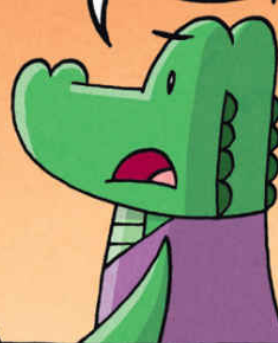
Mango, *NO ONE* will want Boulder Buddies once they learn they're pieces of a **ROCK MONSTER!**

Good point.
I wonder what
Anjie's refund
policy is.



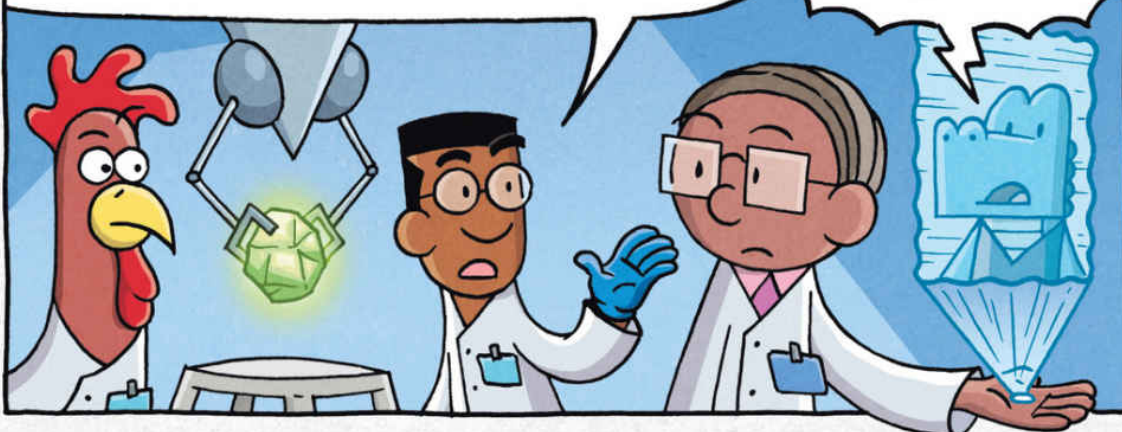
Gators! We've analyzed that rock sample and have an update. It's not natural rock—it's **CONCRETE!**

Concrete?
What
makes it
GLOW?

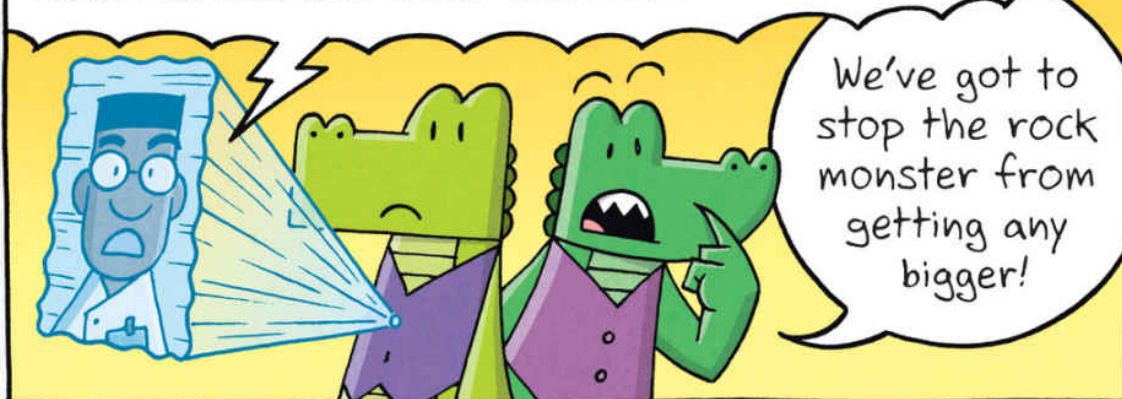


Concrete is *porous*, which means it can absorb liquid. In this case, it's soaked up **NUCLEAR WASTE!**

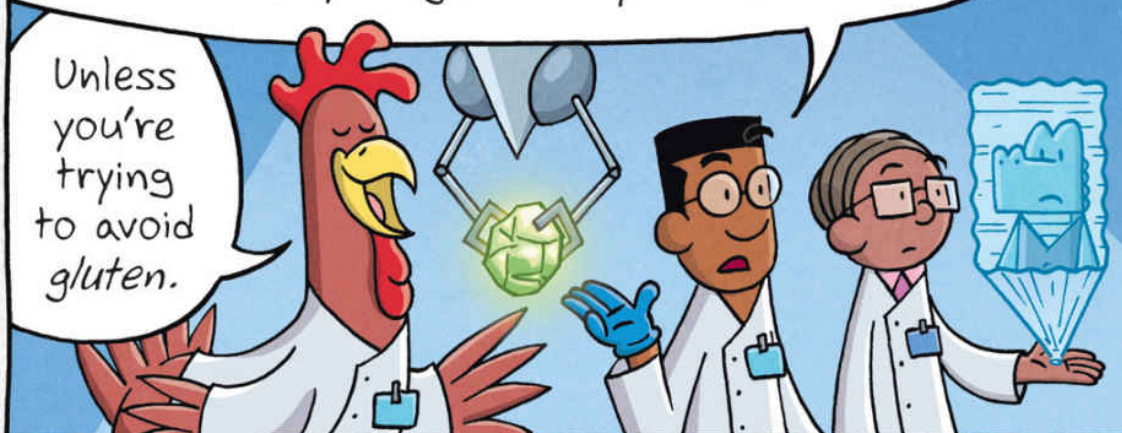
NUCLEAR WASTE?! Is it dangerous?!



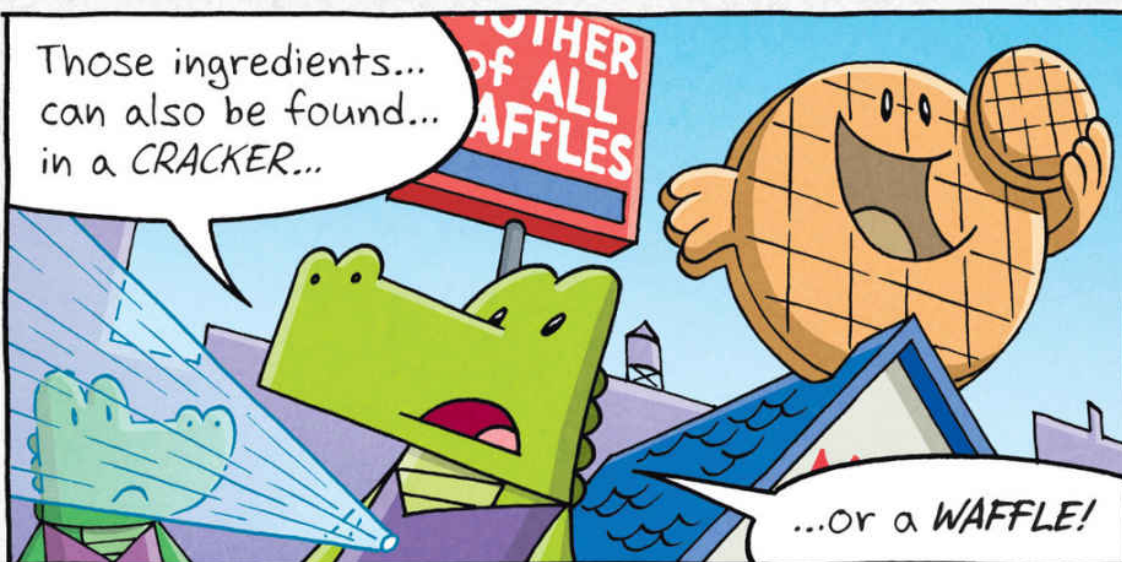
The concrete acts as a **buffer**, so in "rock" form it's pretty harmless. But if you put enough of these Boulder Buddies together, all the **radiation** in them could be *HOTTER THAN THE SUN!*



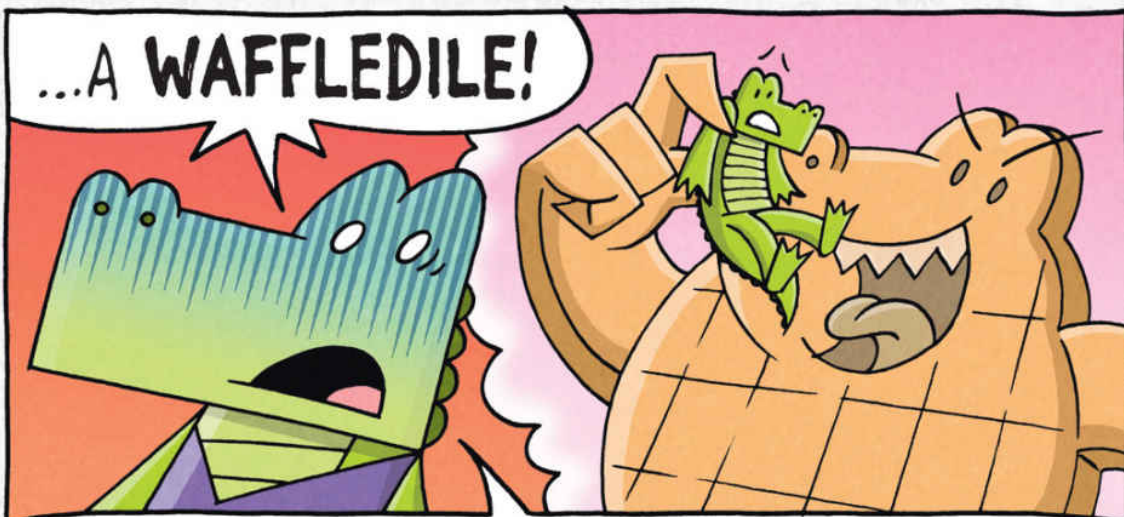
We also found trace elements of **flour**, **yeast**, and **baking soda**. But those ingredients aren't anything to worry about.



Those ingredients... can also be found... in a **CRACKER**...



...A WAFFLEDILE!



After all this time, and all his different forms, **Daryl** lives once more...*AGAIN*...for another chance at *revenge*!

≡GASP!≡ I covered Waffledile in **CONCRETE**! And then MegaRoboBrash crushed him to bits! The **Boulder Buddies** are Waffledile's **CRUMBLD REMAINS!!!**



Anjie's store is right next to the **MAW**. She must have *FOUND* the chunks of Waffledile here.

No, Anjie said she found them where she finds *ALL* her junk...

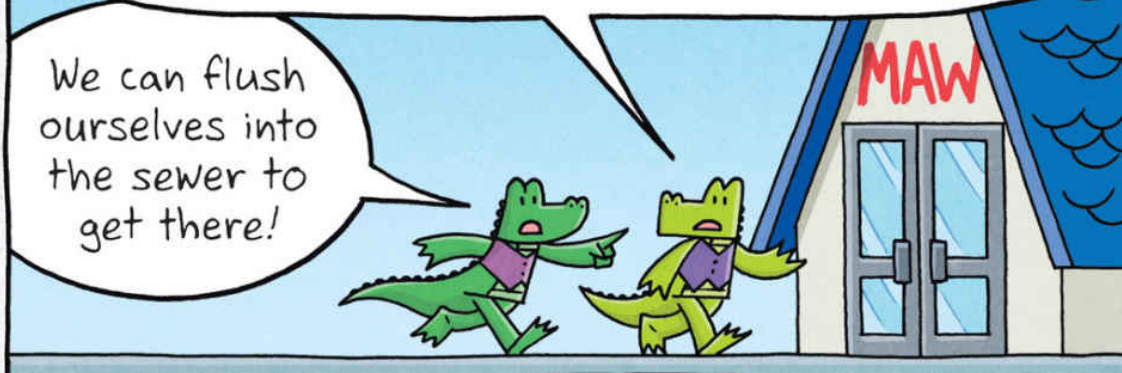


WAIT! THAT'S IT! When Angie said **JUNK**, she meant it! Waffledile's remains were taken to the **CITY DUMP**! Angie doesn't sell *ANTIQUES*—she sells *GARBAGE*!



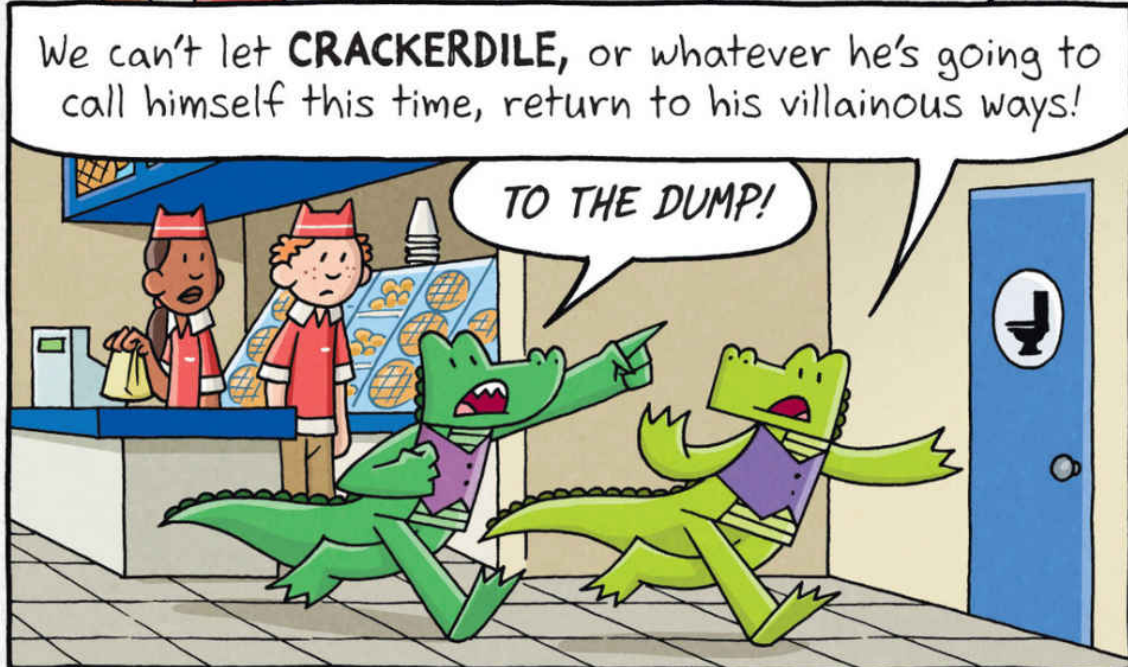
Angie said she'd run out of Boulder Buddies and was going to get more... That means there may still be pieces of Waffledile at the **DUMP**!

We can flush ourselves into the sewer to get there!



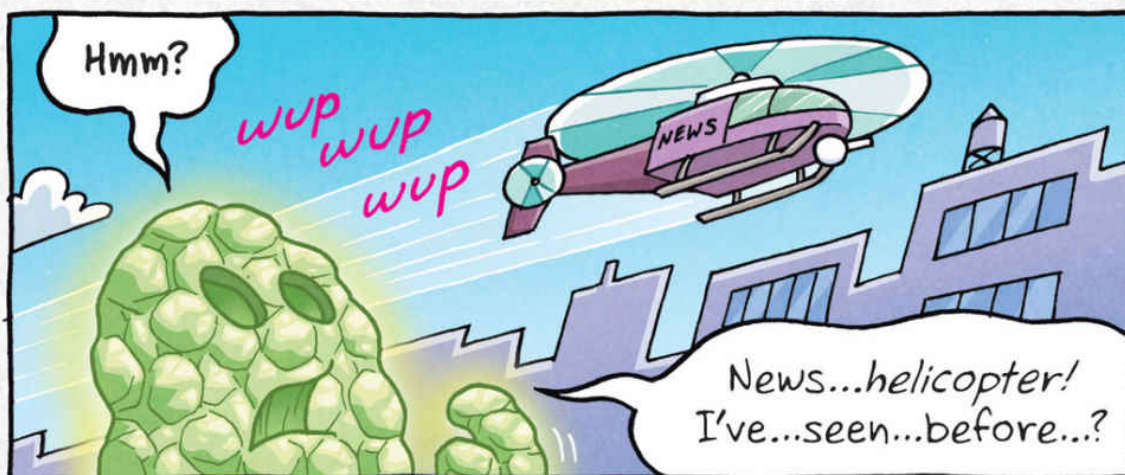
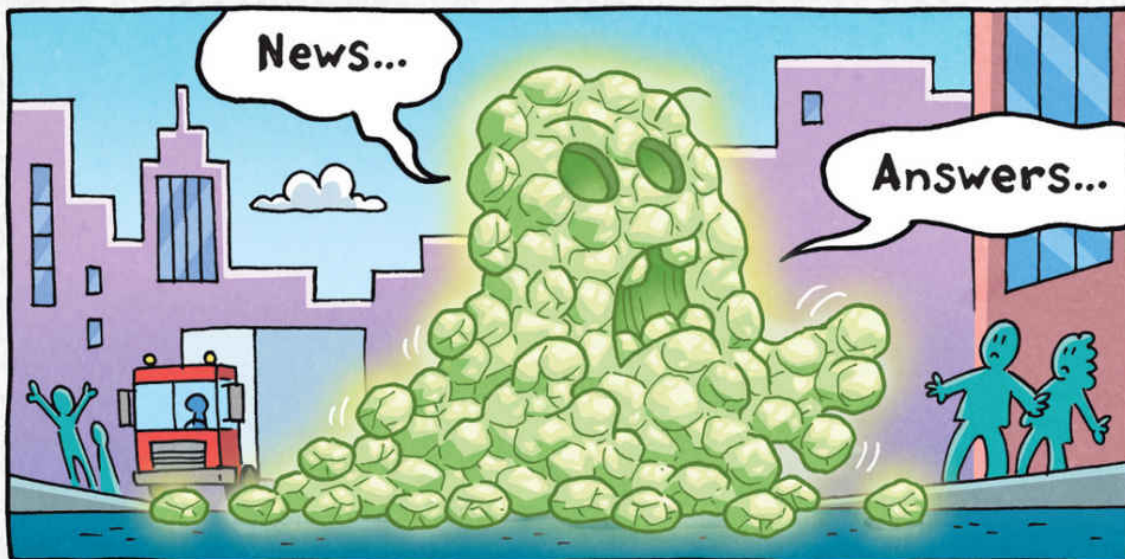
Welcome to the MAW. Would you like some **FRUGGETS**? They're our new French toast-style chicken nuggets.

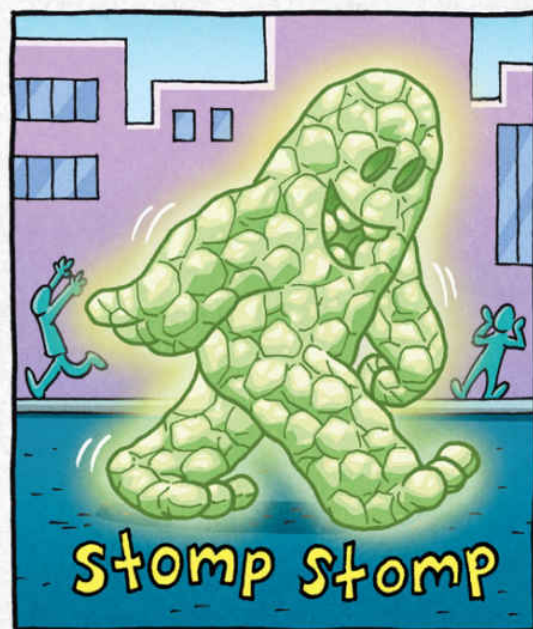
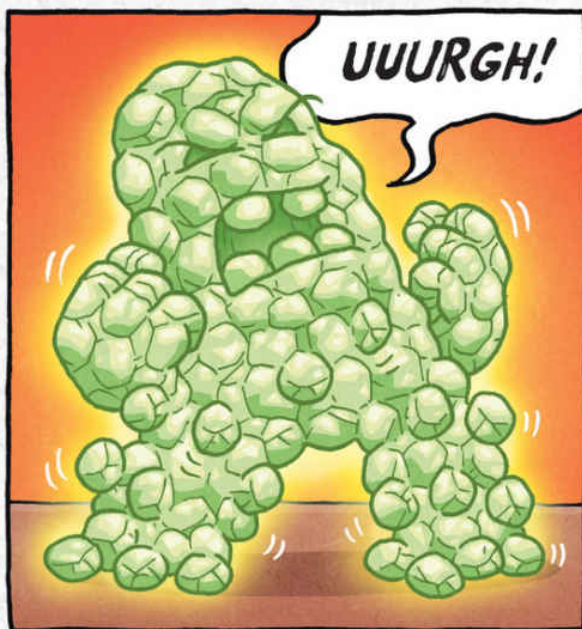
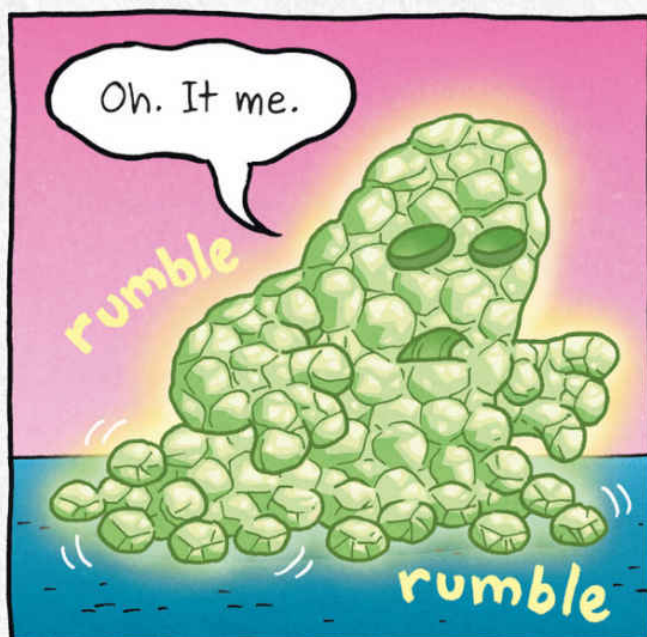
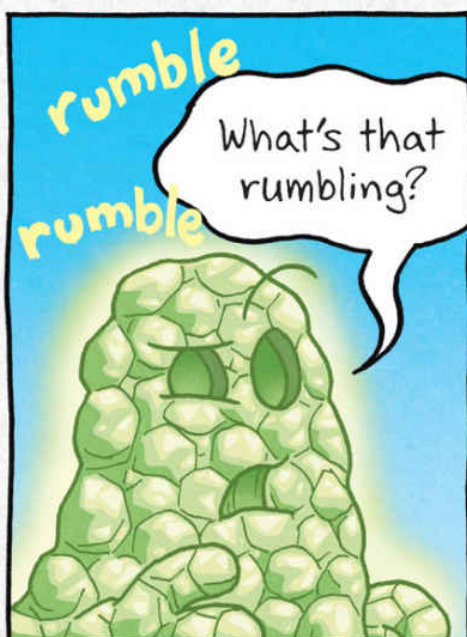
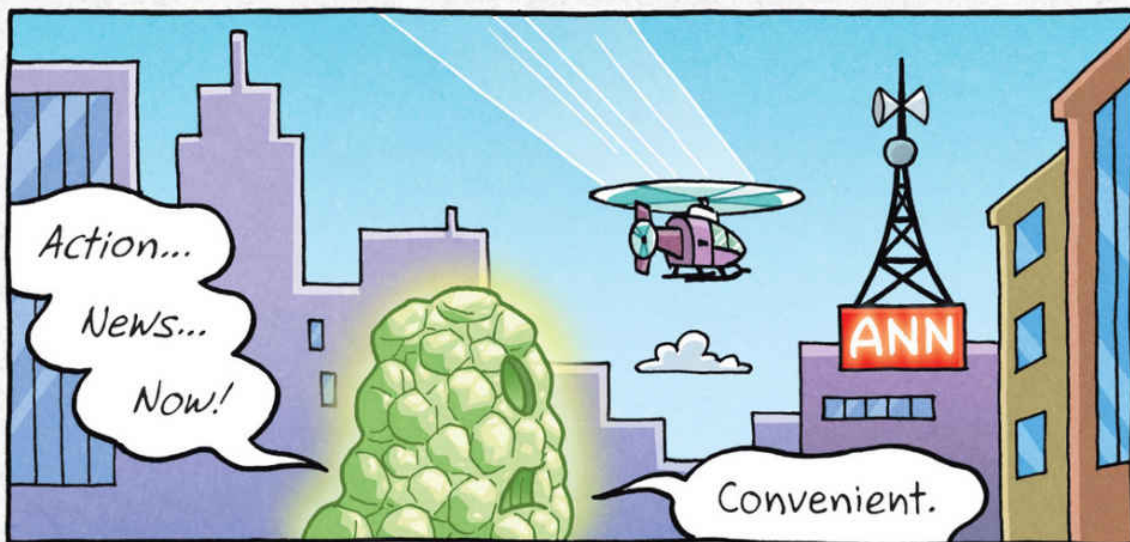




Chapter 13

But just as Mango and Brash enter the sewer,
the rock monster exits it...









My exposé of the Investigator
doesn't air until tonight—

But I suppose
I can make an
exception!

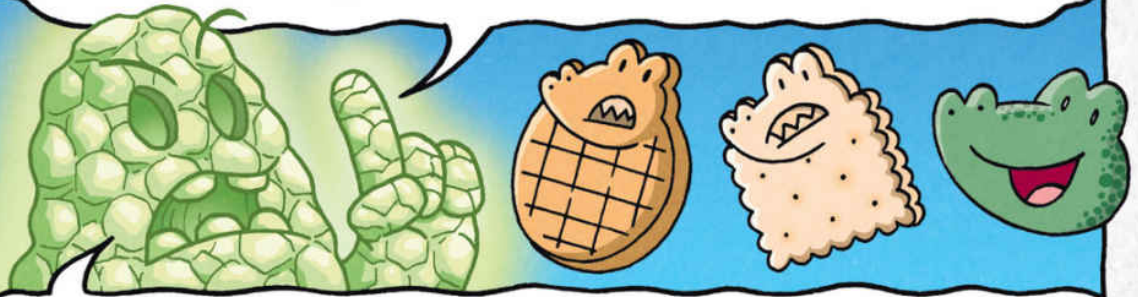
He shows up in quite a lot of archived news footage.
I've compiled every appearance I've found so far...

I believe that's him disguised as an astronaut...
There he's disguised as an orchestra musician...

And here he is **naked**, which isn't much of a disguise,
but he's being *swallowed* by a large waffle—that later
got *crushed* by the even larger robot Investigator!

I...I ***WAS*** that waffle!

Yes... YES! I remember now... I was a **waffle**—NO!
I was a **cracker**—NO! I was a...dile! A **CROCODILE!**
A secret agent crocodile named **DARYL!**



This InvestiGator... He was my partner—**BRASH!** And
Brash didn't **SAVE** me! **HE** made me into a **MONSTER!**

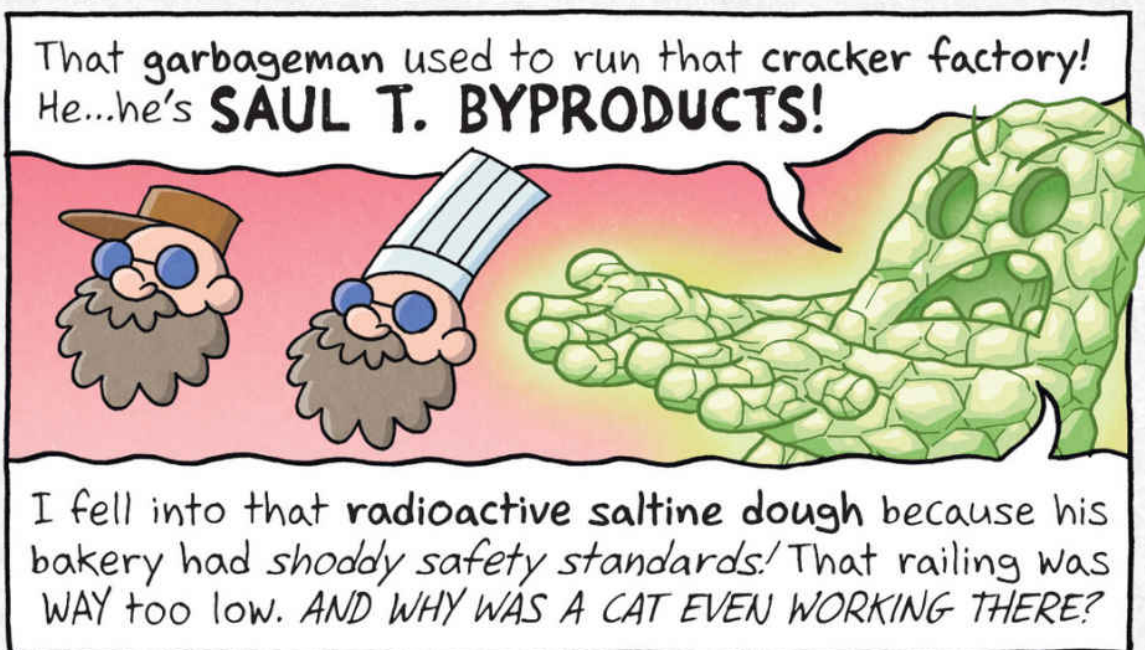
I must have...**REVENGE!!!**

Wait, what's
this?

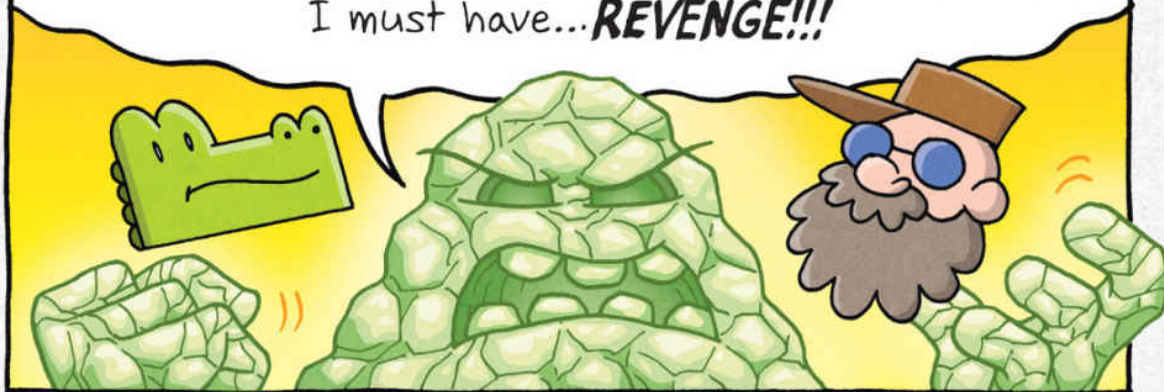


Oh, this is from when that cracker company got shut
down for baking **toxic waste** into their saltines.
One chef died! And even a cat got fired! But look—
THAT chef is the InvestiGator in disguise!

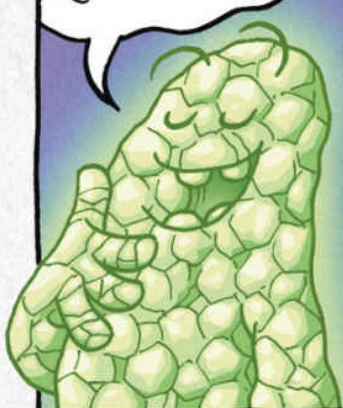




Brash may have taken a *PIECE* of me... But Saul has taken *EVERYTHING* from me! My friend...my job... my identity...my *LIFE*! **SAUL T. BYPRODUCTS** is the *TRUE* villain in all of this. **HE** made me into a **MONSTER!** I must have...**REVENGE!!!**

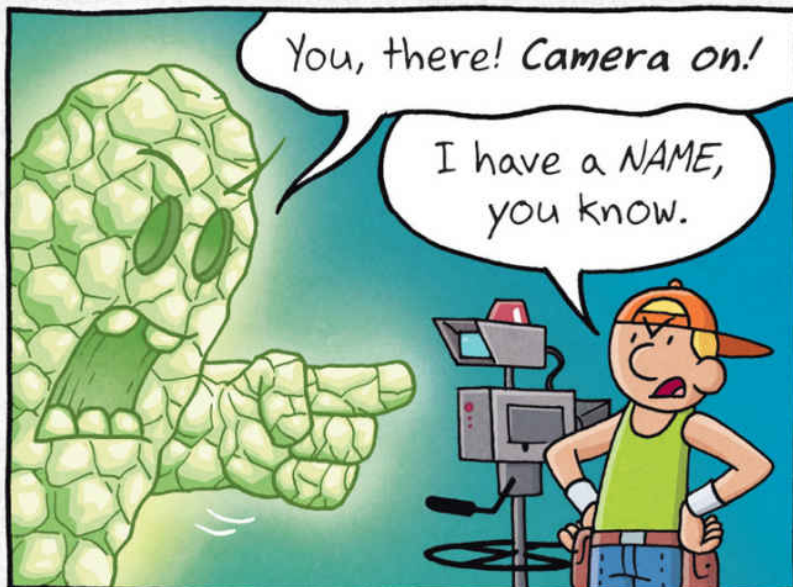


Finally, some character growth!

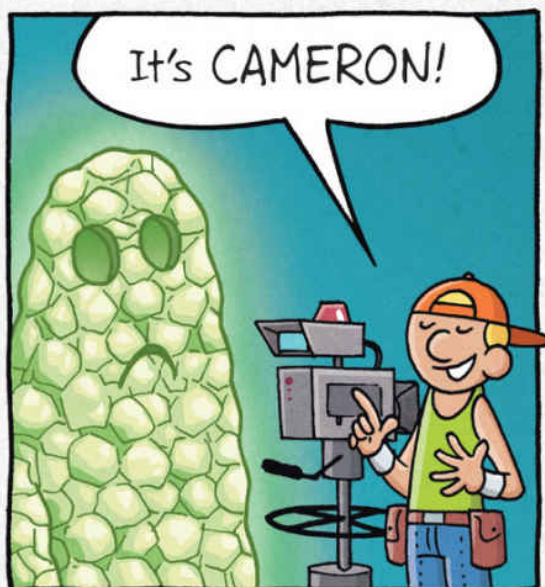


You, there! *Camera on!*

I have a *NAME*, you know.

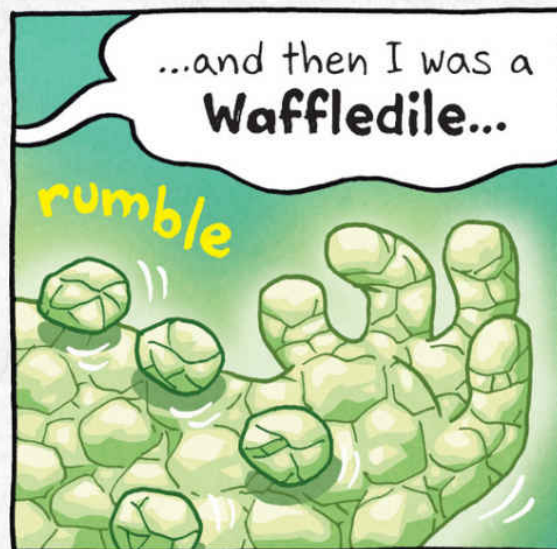
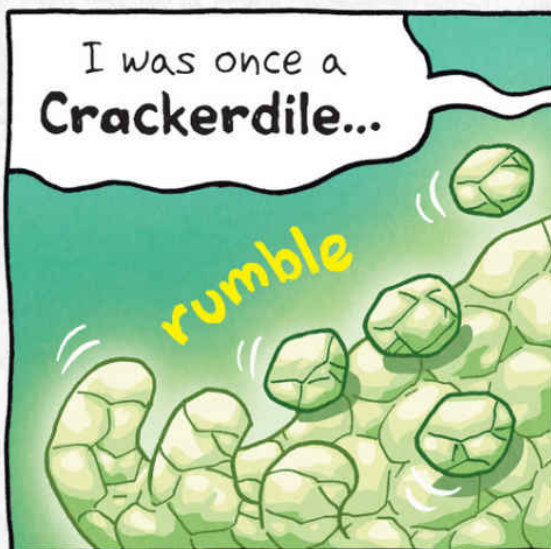
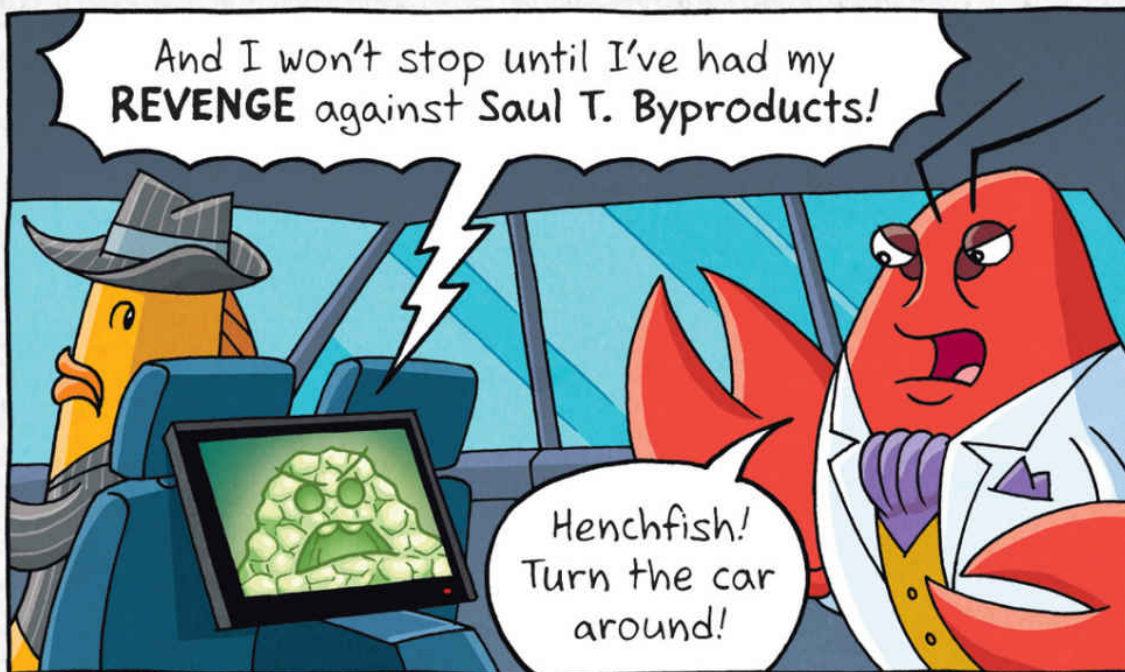
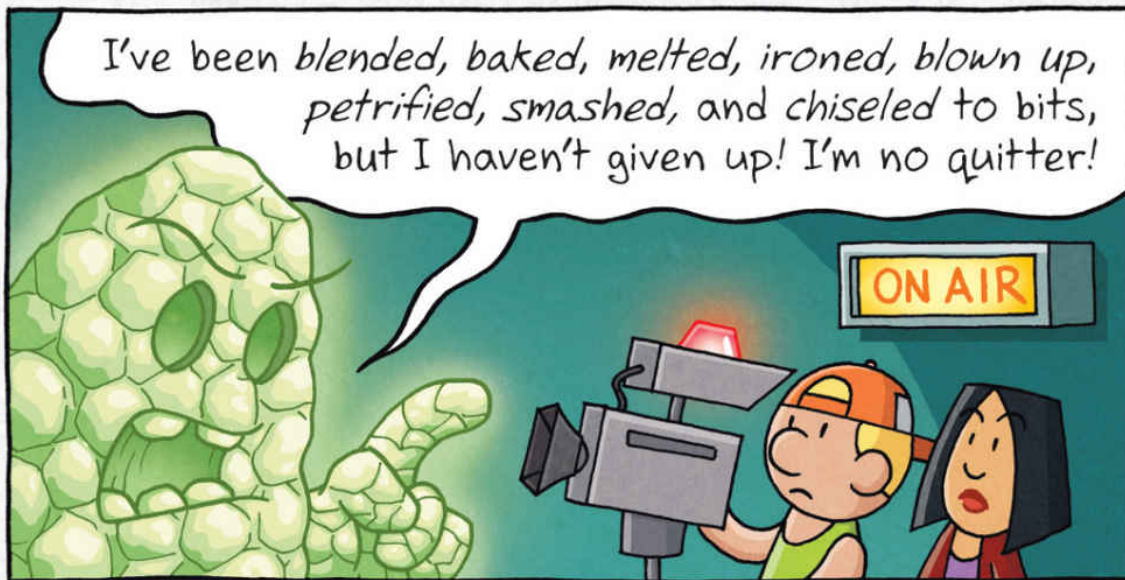


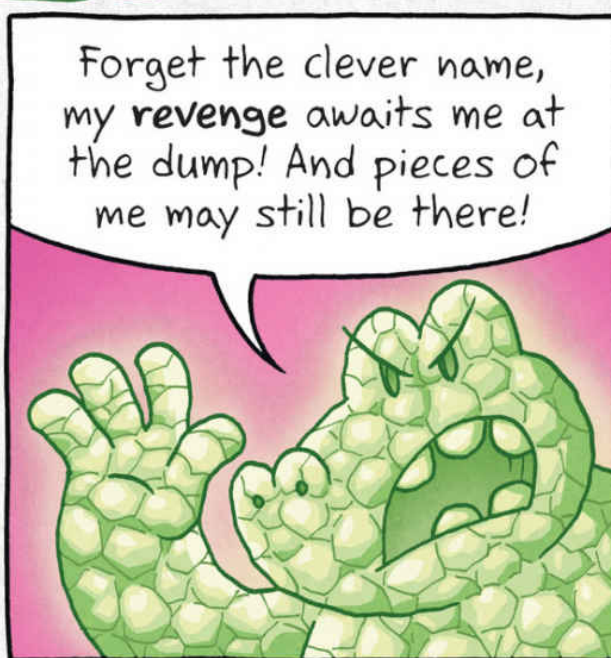
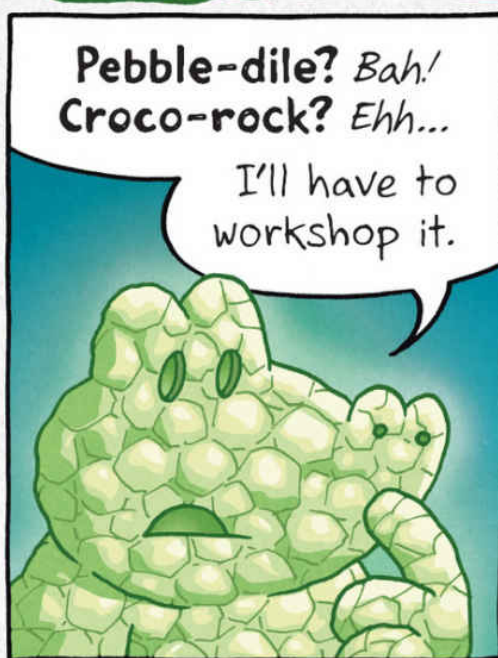
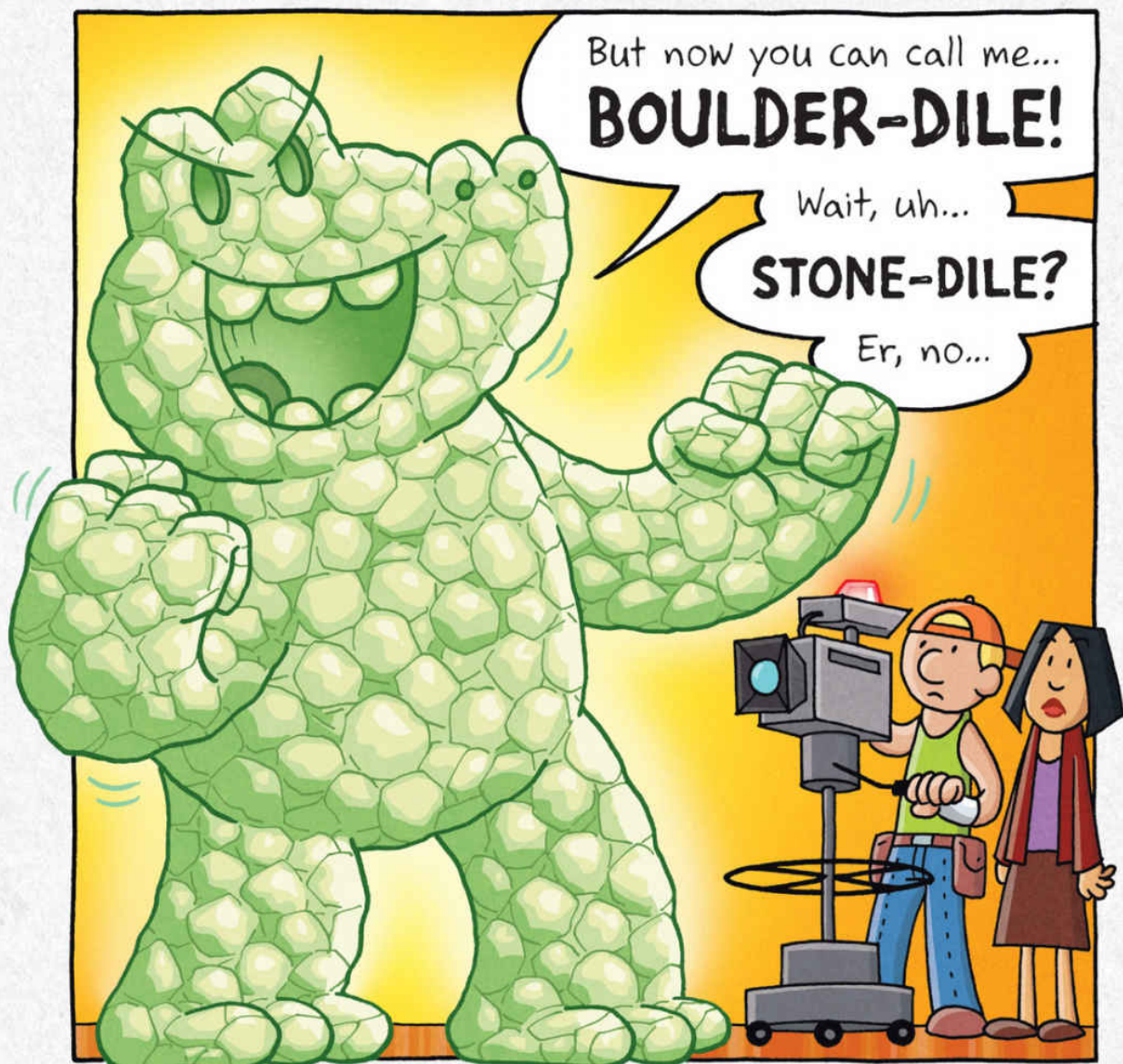
It's **CAMERON!**

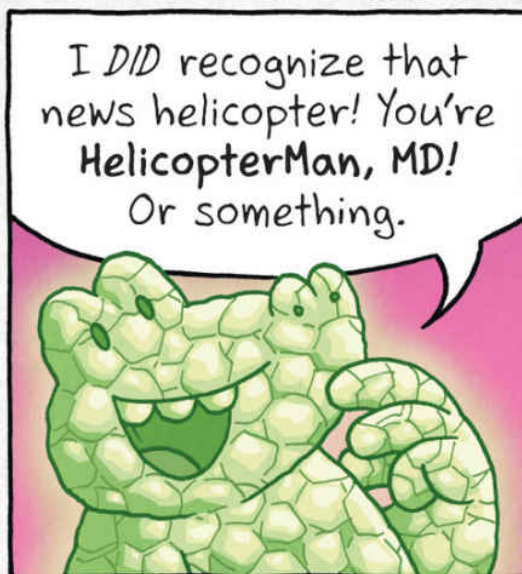
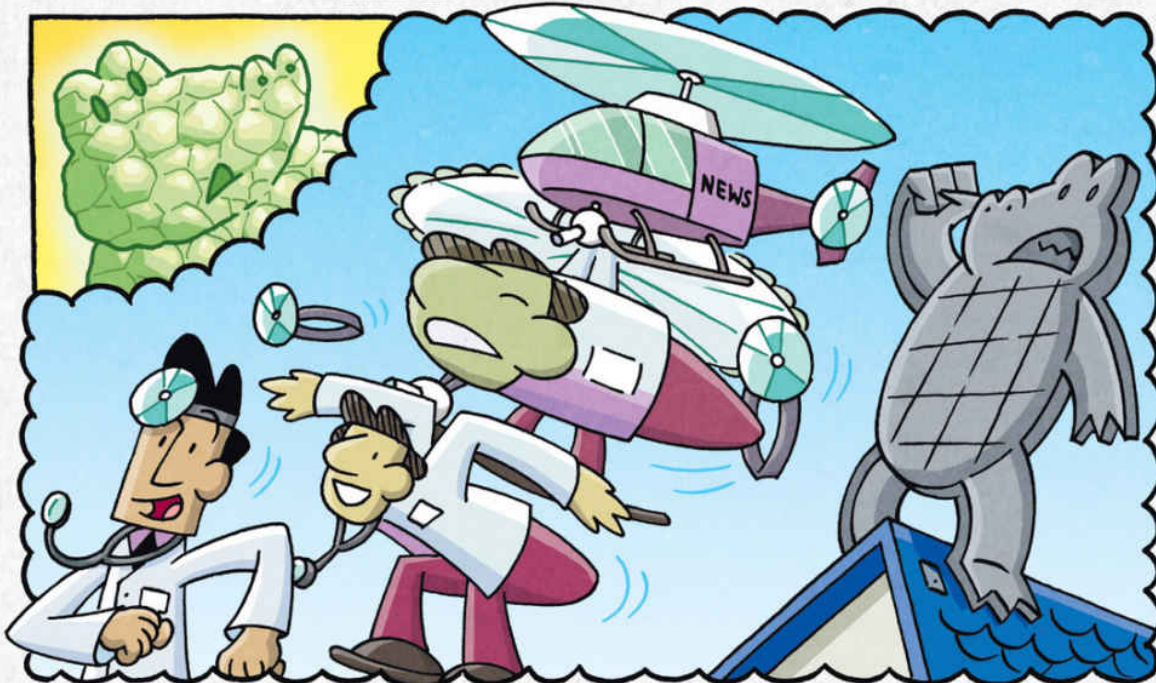
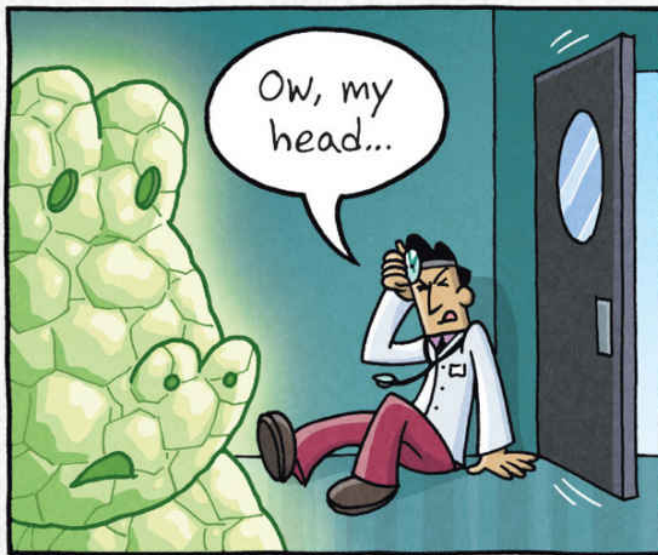


CAMERA ON, CAMERON!

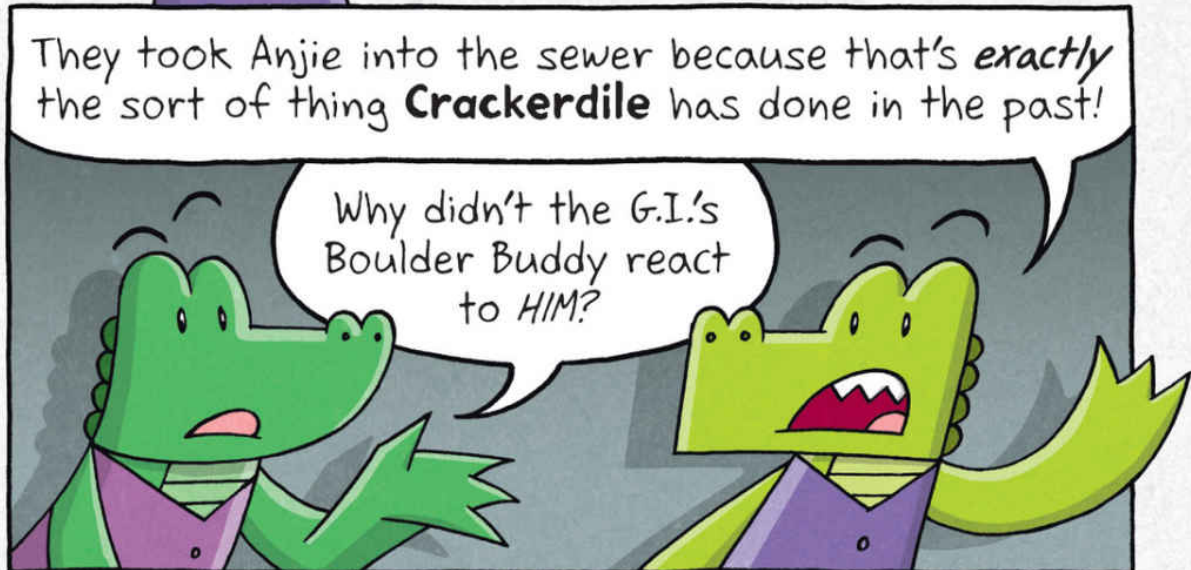
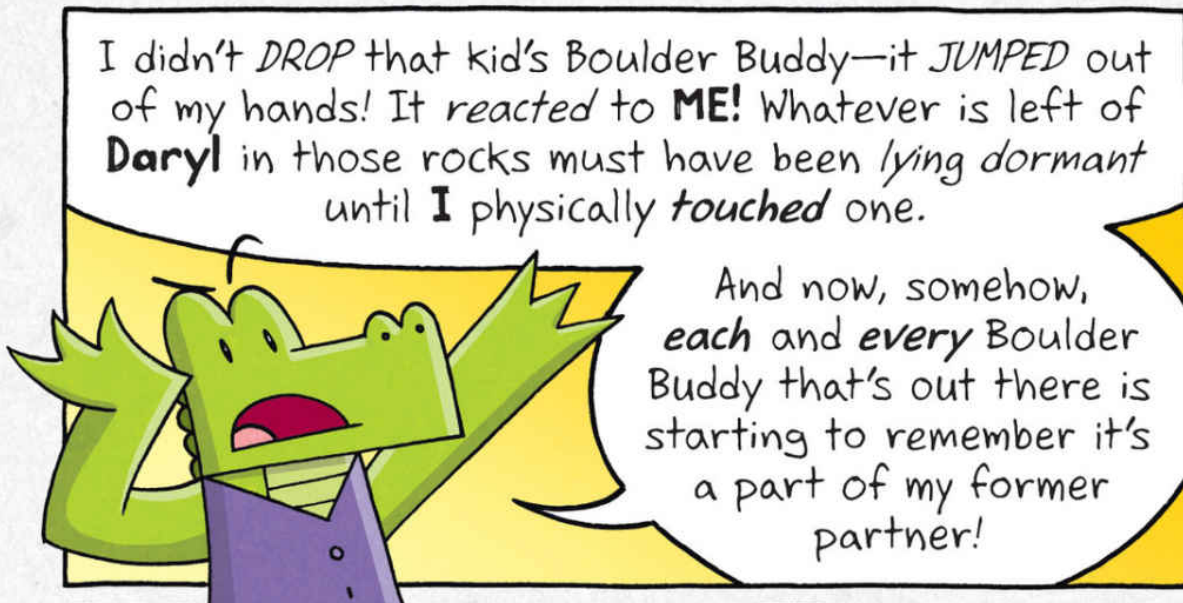


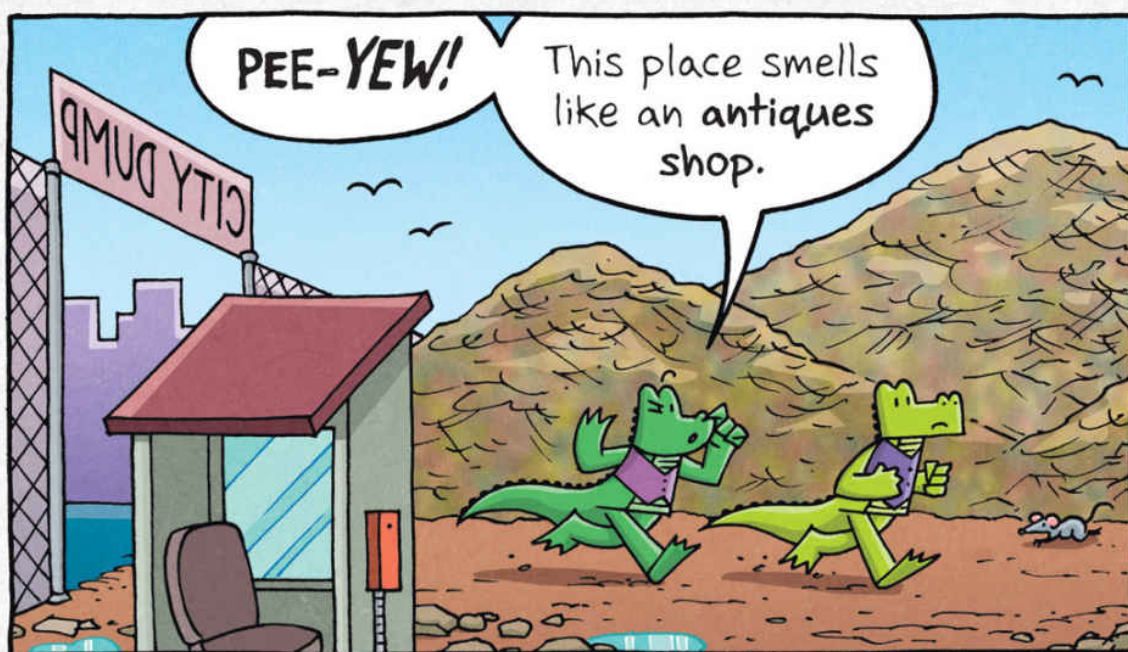
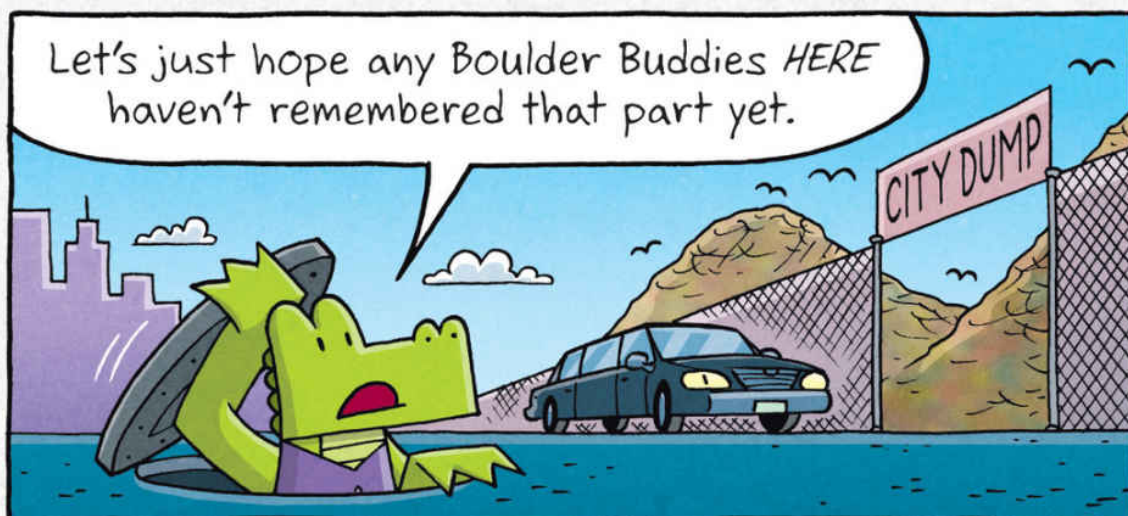


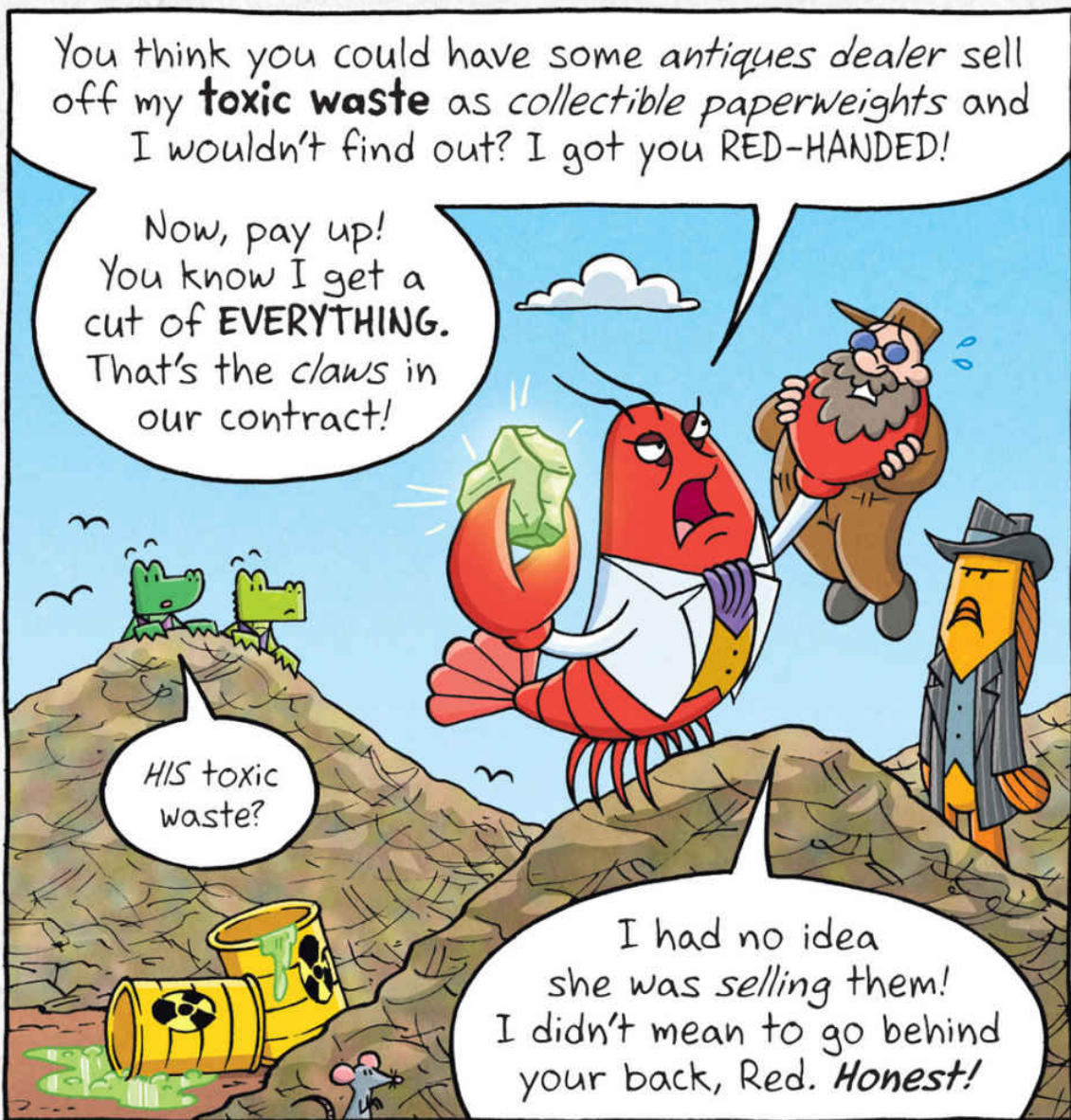




Chapter 14







Who leaves open barrels of **toxic waste** just lying around for anyone to stumble upon? I mean, really.



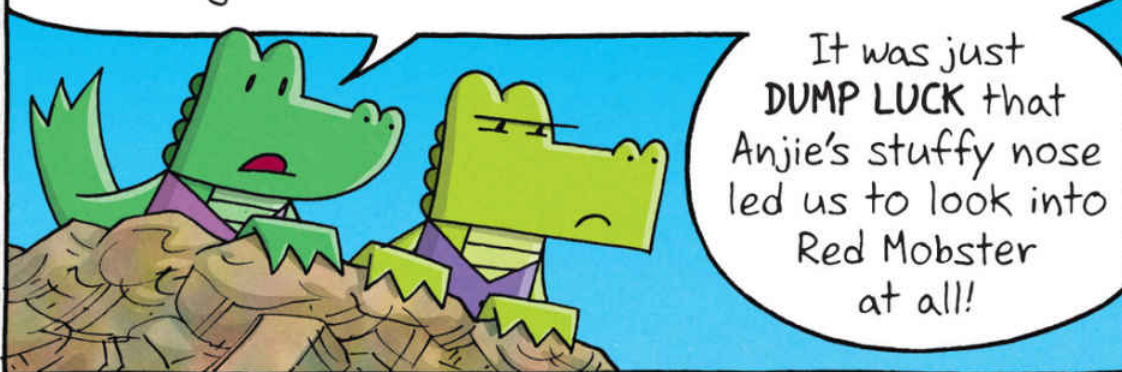
The remains of Waffledile must've been dumped nearby and the concrete absorbed it!

You know the score. You work for ME. And according to my henchfish, now I got the **InvestiGator** looking into me. You think I want that kinda heat?

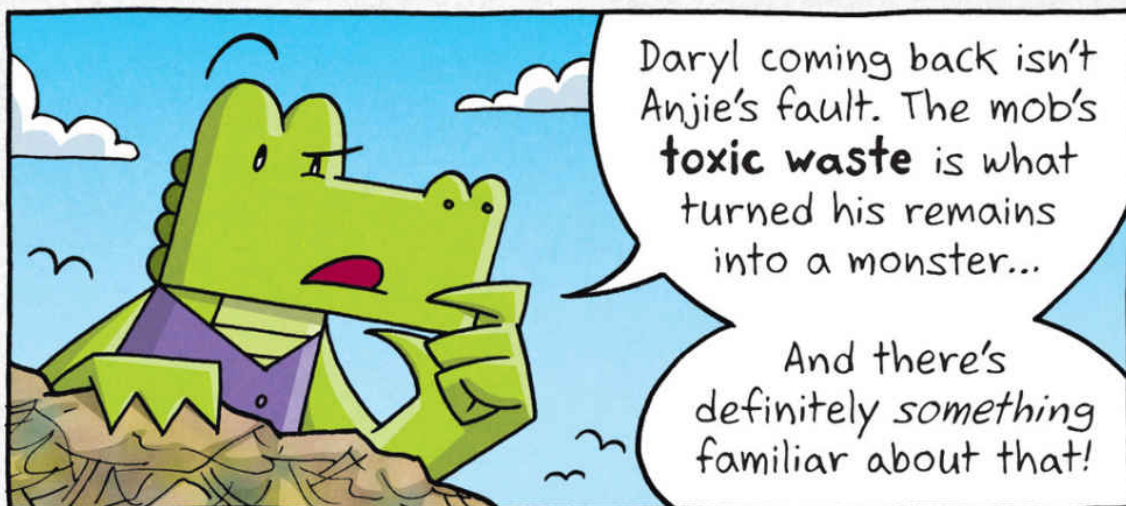


I'm not gonna get *pinched* for your carelessness.

If Anjie's been getting the rocks from that garbage-man... And *HE* works for Red... Then Anjie ***WAS*** working with the mob, even if she didn't know it!



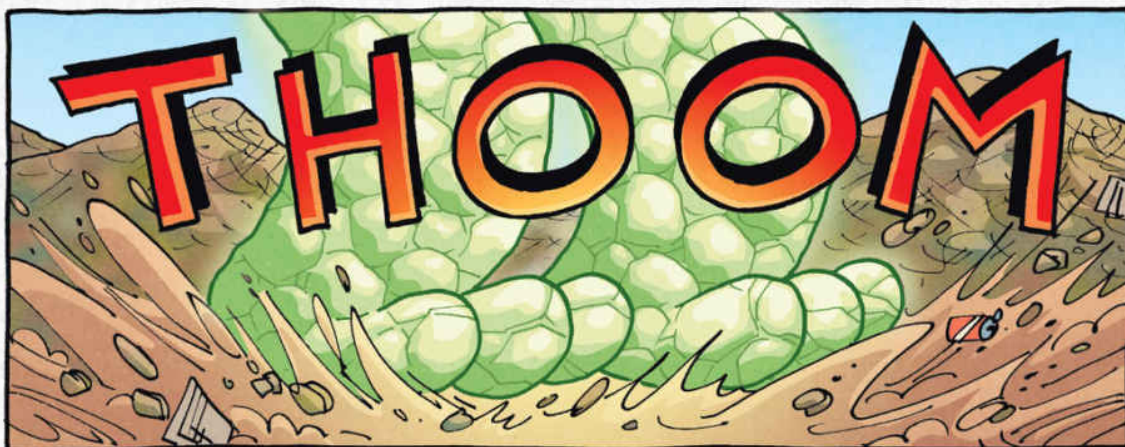
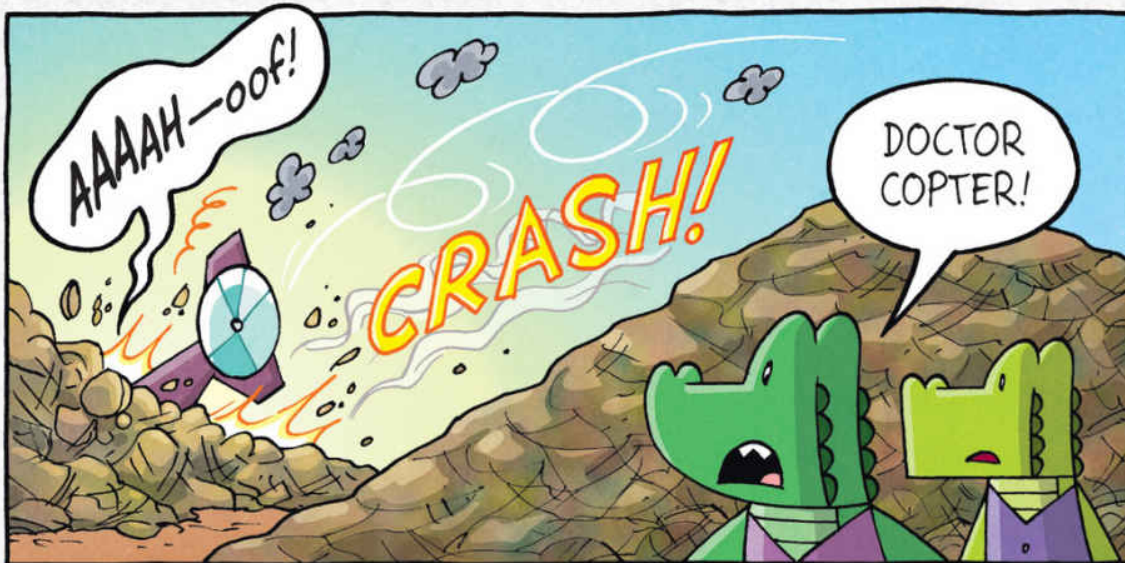
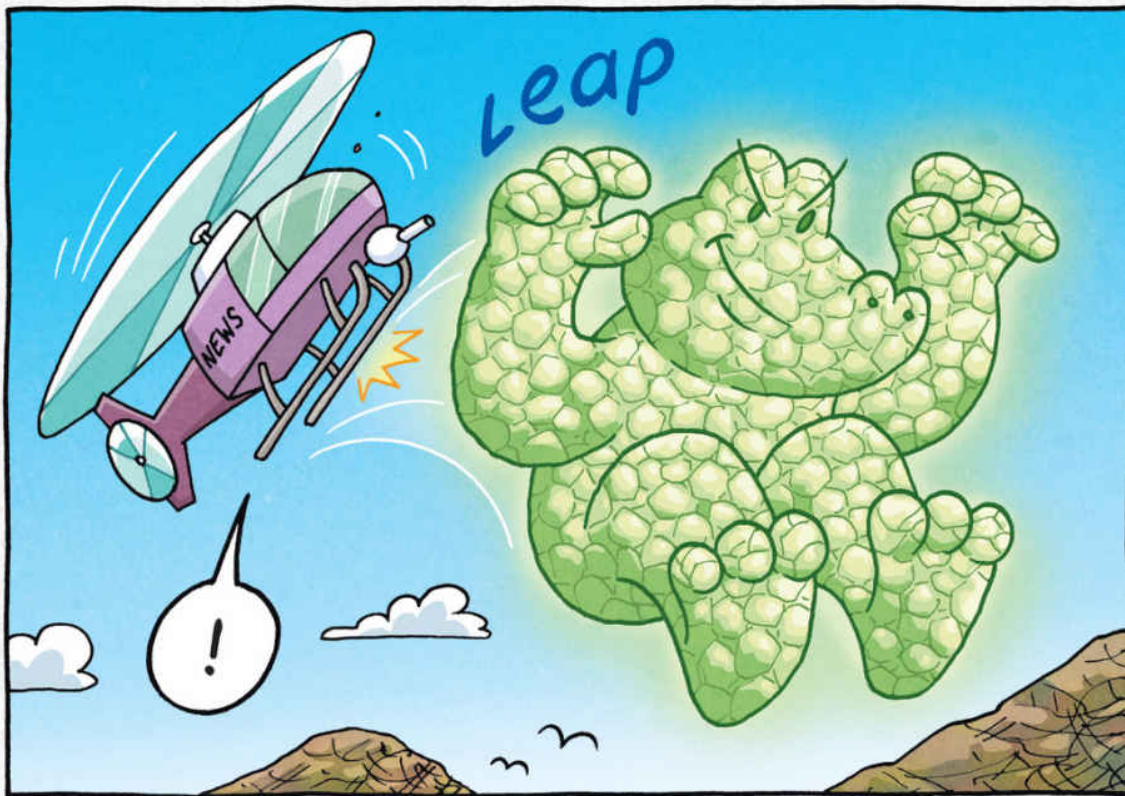
It was just **DUMP LUCK** that Anjie's stuffy nose led us to look into Red Mobster at all!





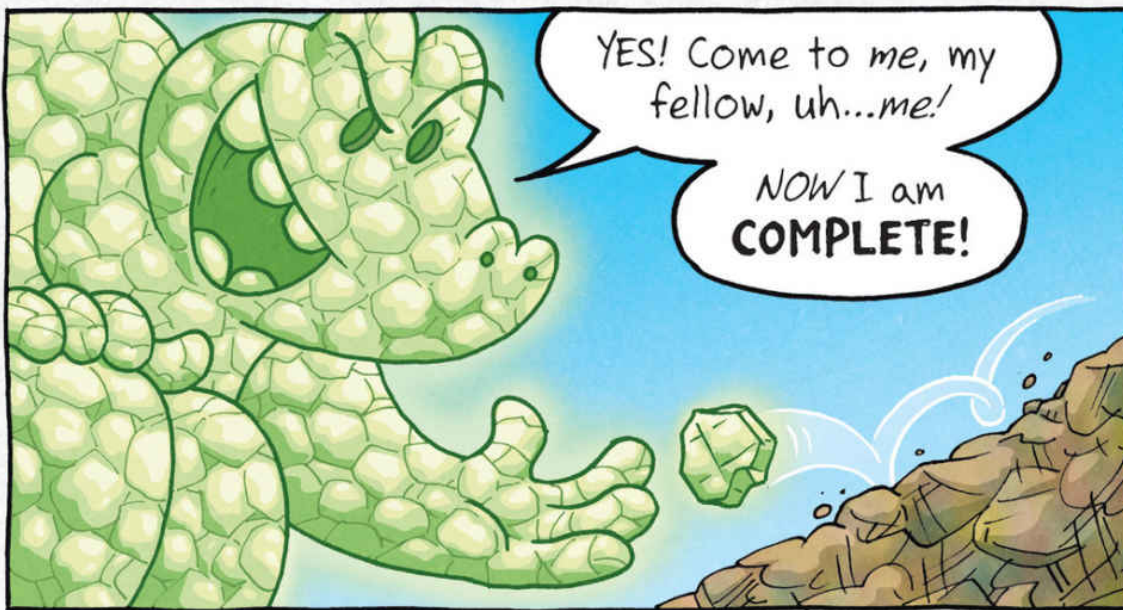
Chop Chop Chop Chop Chop

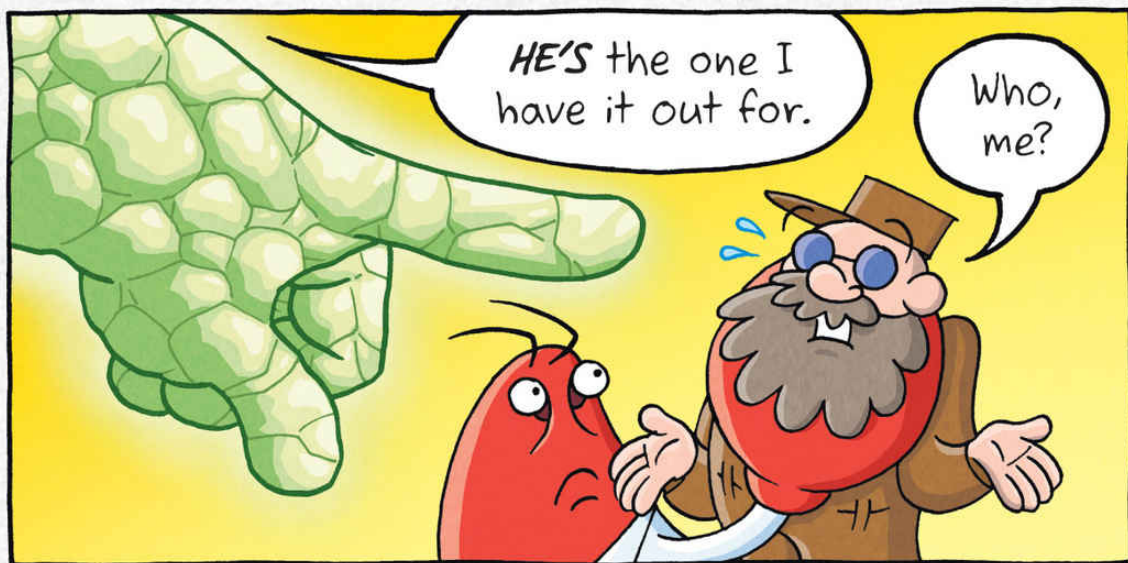
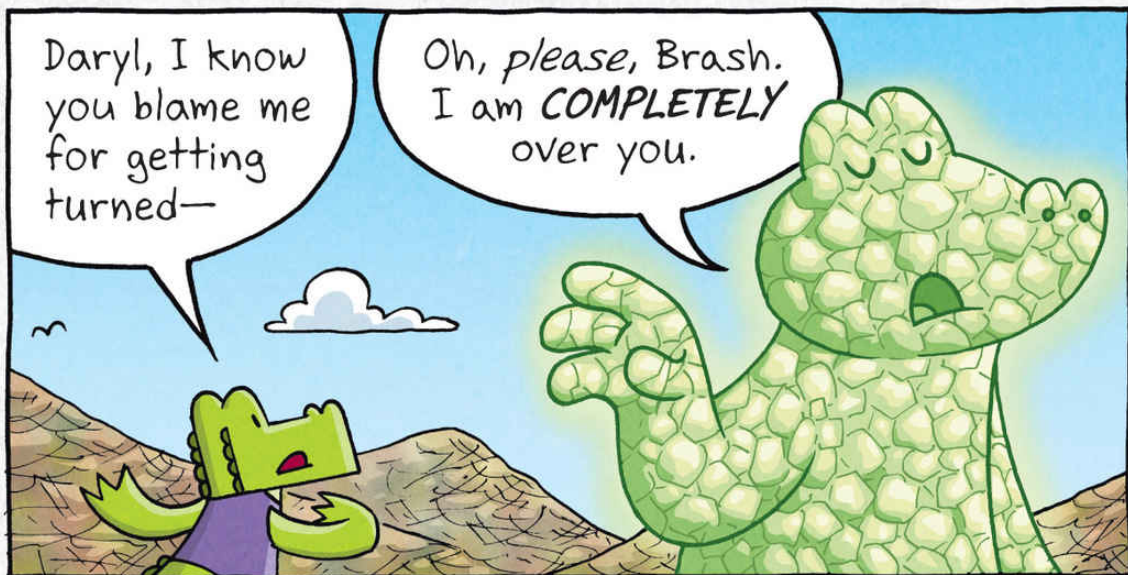


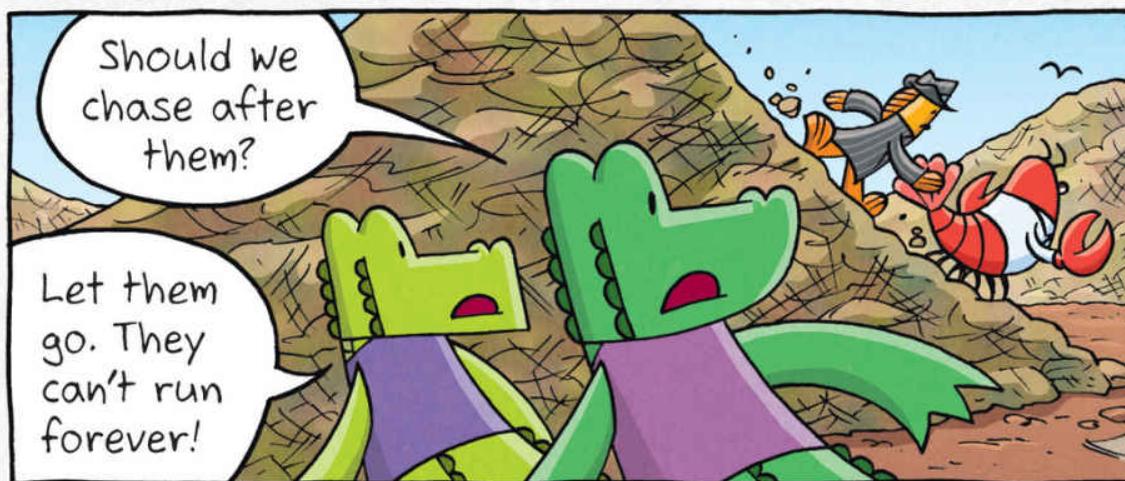


Chapter 15

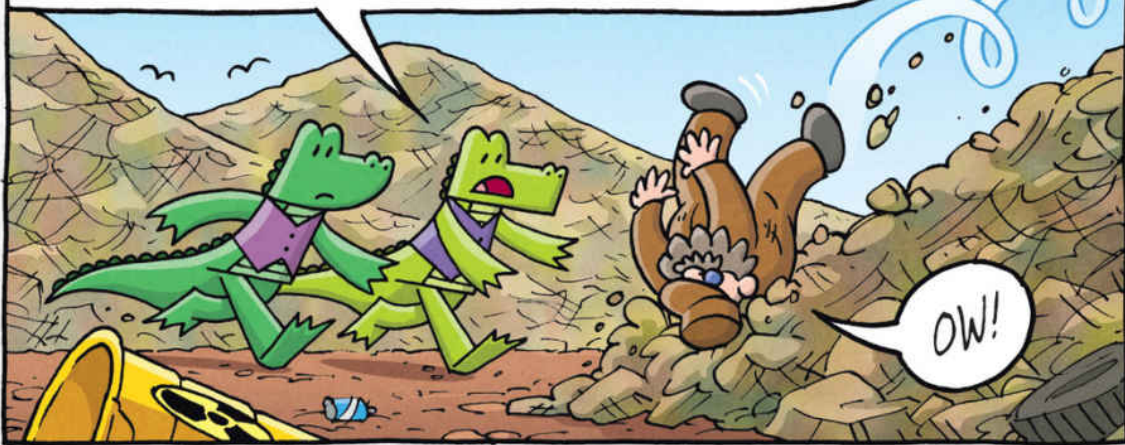








This **garbageman** will have enough dirt on **Red Mobster** to put him away for good.



RAGH!

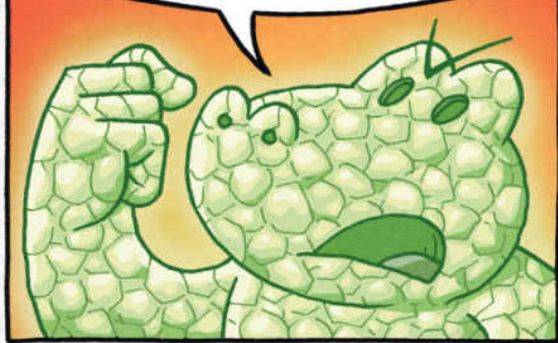
GIVE HIM
TO ME!

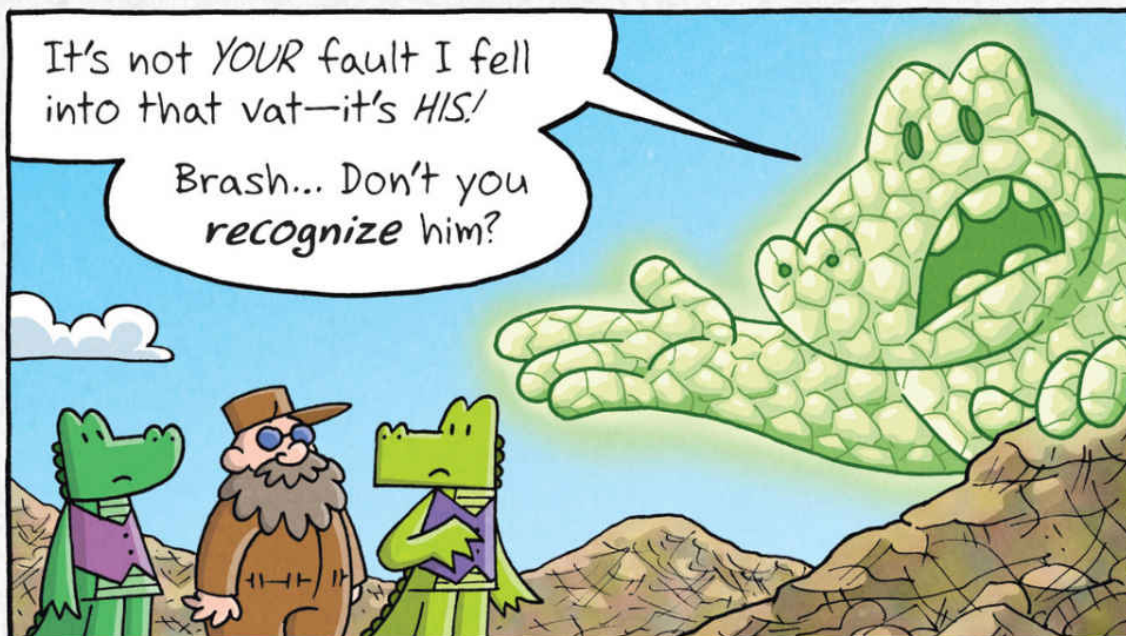


You being a **BAD GUY** isn't written in **STONE**. And it was Red Mobster's **toxic waste** that turned you into **Rockodile!** Why not blame **HIM**?



The **toxic waste** is what **SAVED** me! I should've drowned in that **saltine dough**. But the radiation kept me *alive*.





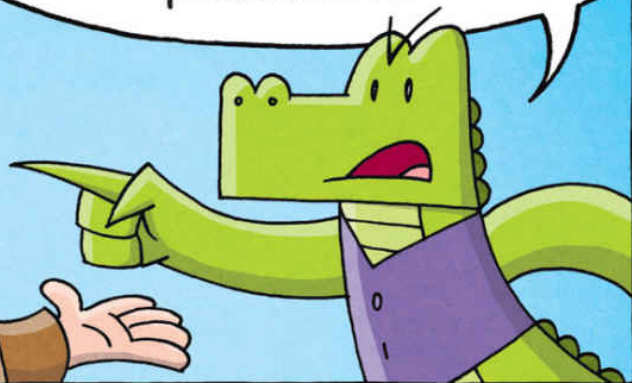
You're **Saul T. Byproducts!** It was *YOUR* cracker company that was disposing of **nuclear waste** by baking it into **saltines!**



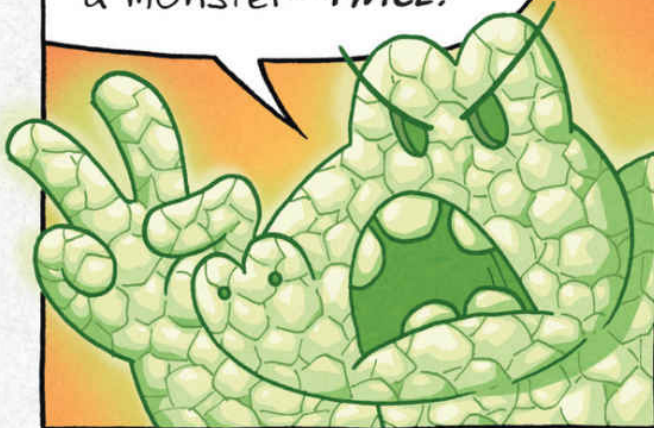
I wouldn't say **BAKING** it in. Really it **LEAKED** in.



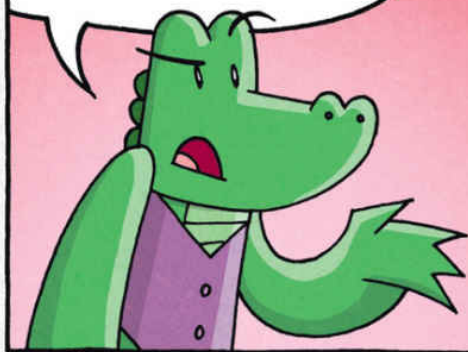
Daryl's right! He **NEVER** would've fallen over that railing if your bakery followed **proper safety precautions!**



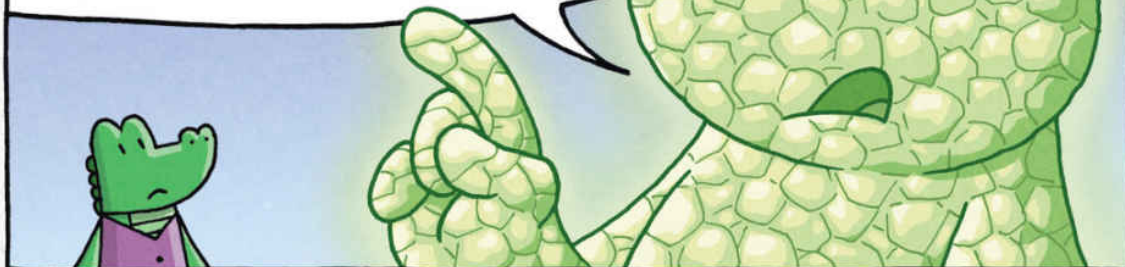
You see? This man *IS* the reason I became a monster—**TWICE!**



Isn't it **THREE** times? First **Crackerdile**, then **Waffledile**, now **Rockodile?**



No, no. I turned MYSELF into a waffle. So Saul and his irresponsible safety procedures are only directly responsible for TWO of my monstrous forms.

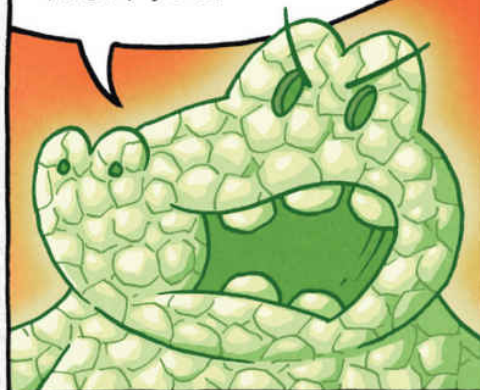


You—you turned my partner into a **MONSTER!** And then you did it again!



Uh...the cat did it!

Saul took everything from me, Brash. And he took **ME** away from **YOU!**



Now that he's caught, we can **BOTH** get revenge for all the harm he's caused us!

Maybe we both **DO** deserve revenge...

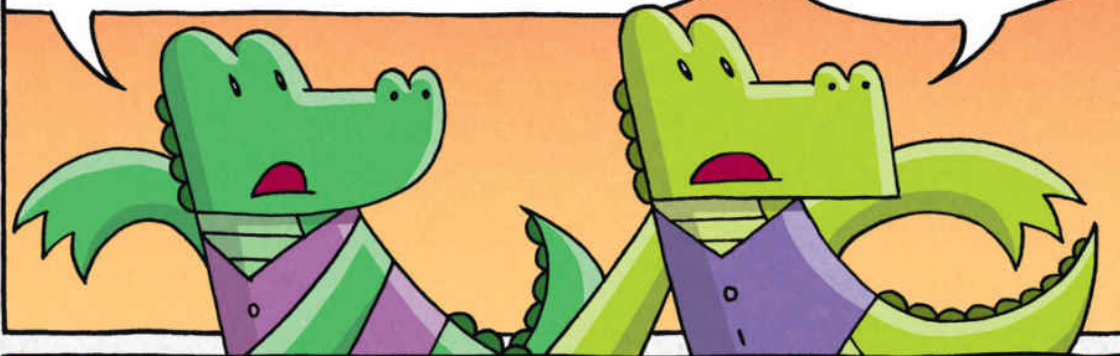


Brash?!
NO!



This is the point in the book where I tell you you can't reason with Daryl, Brash. It's like a *theme* or something.

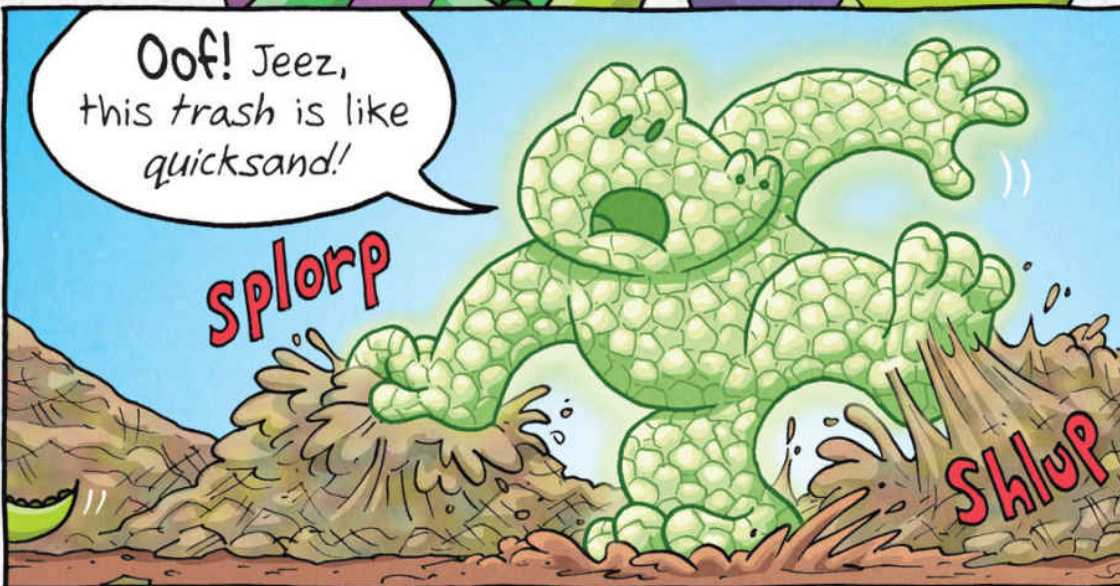
I won't give up, Mango. But now let's just get to Saul *first!*



Oof! Jeez, this trash is like quicksand!

splorp

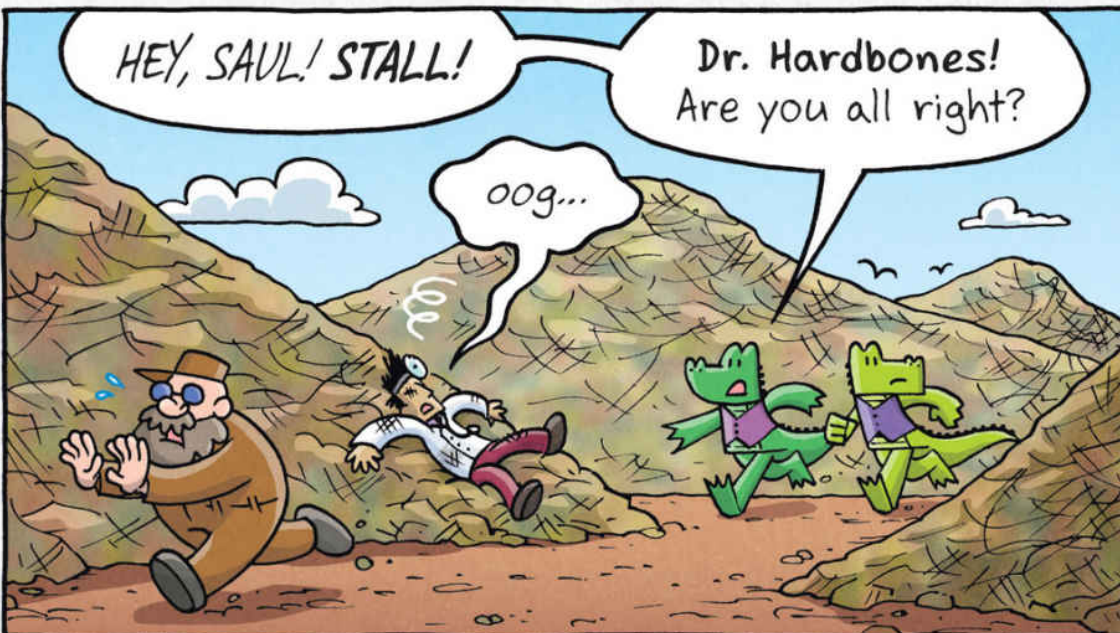
shlop

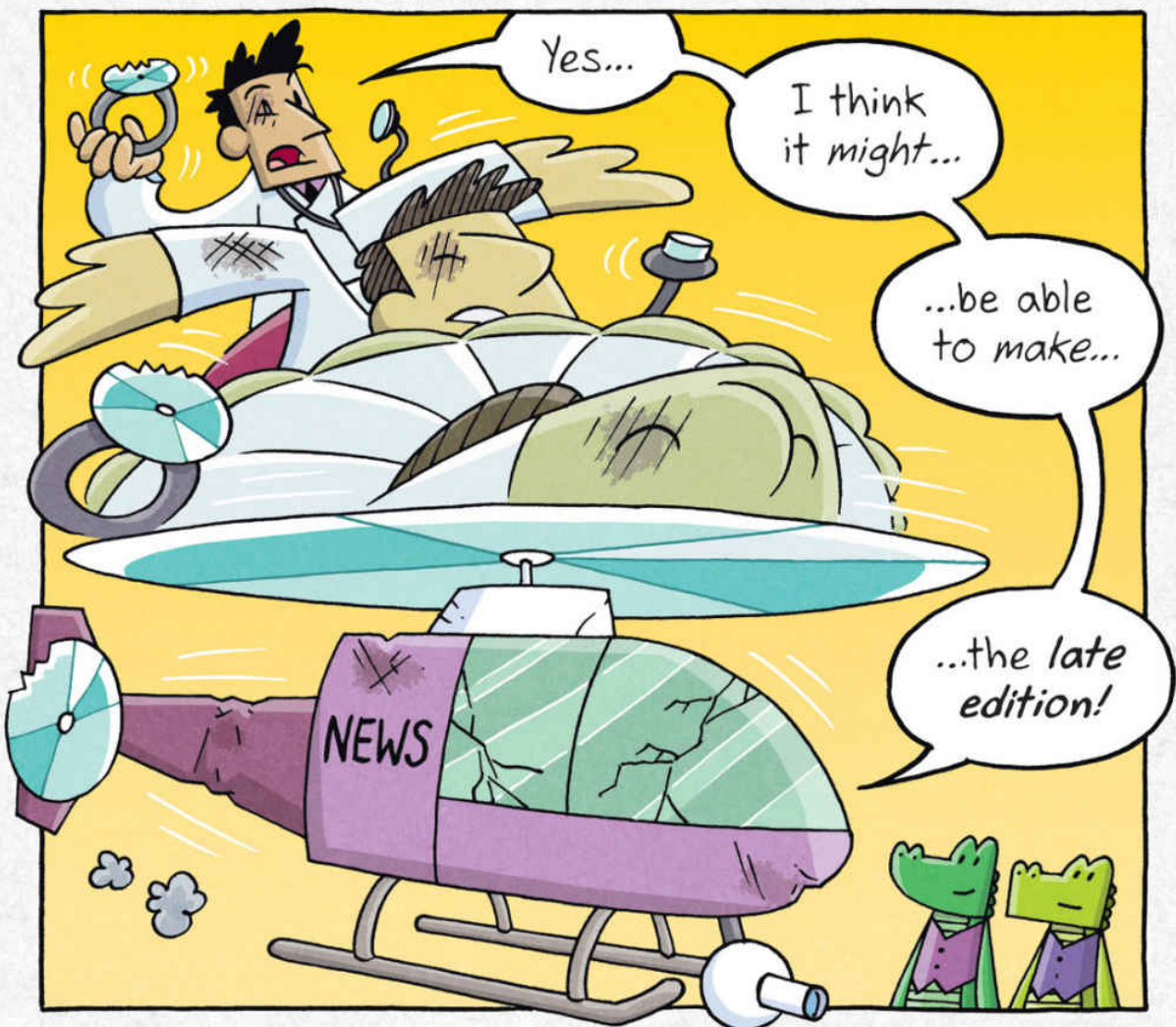
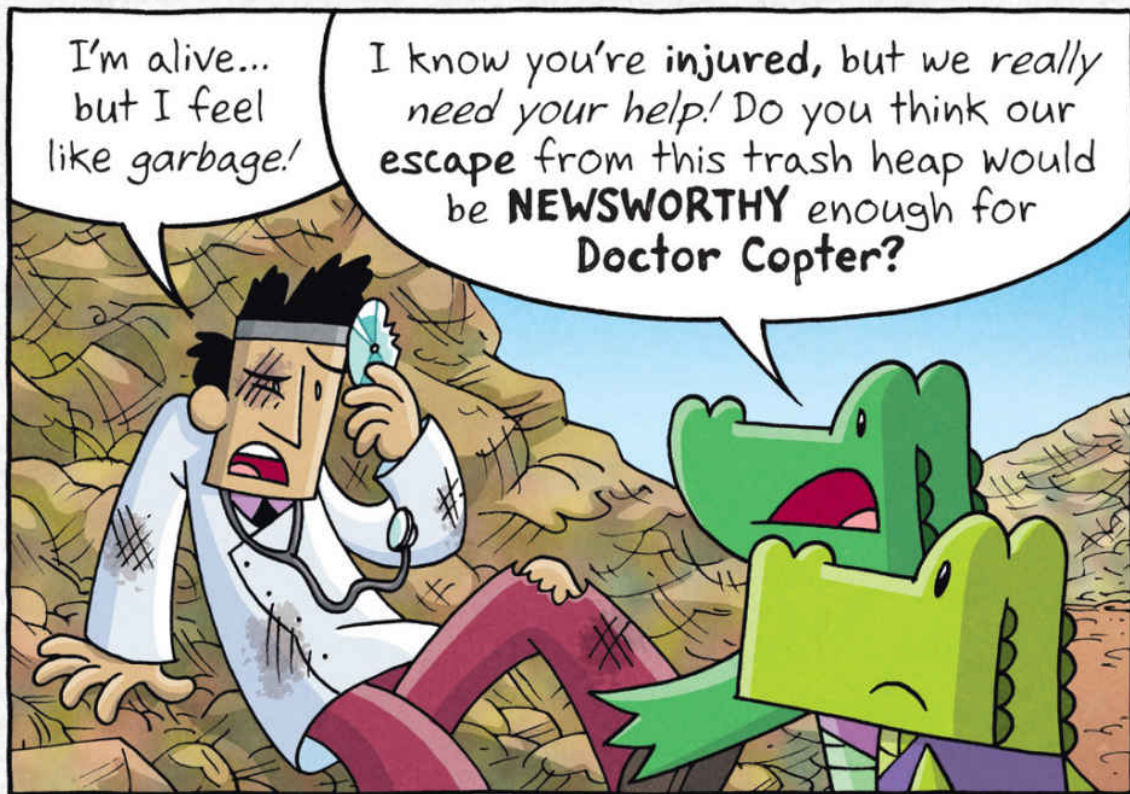


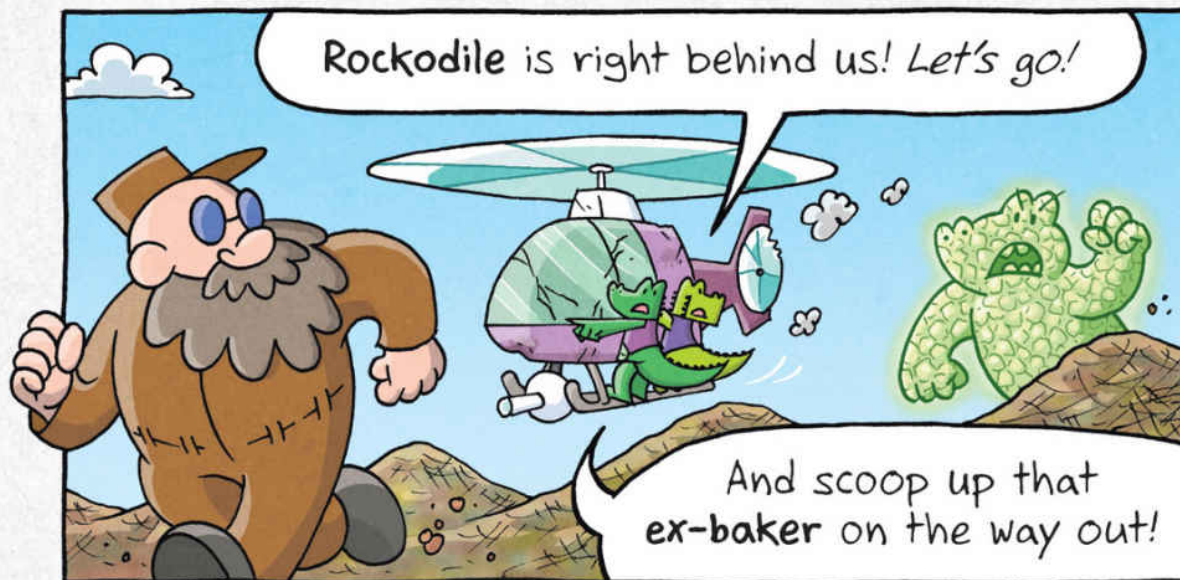
HEY, SAUL! STALL!

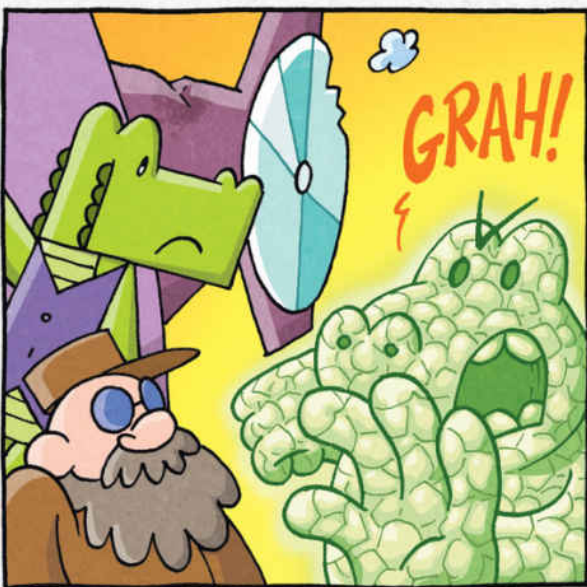
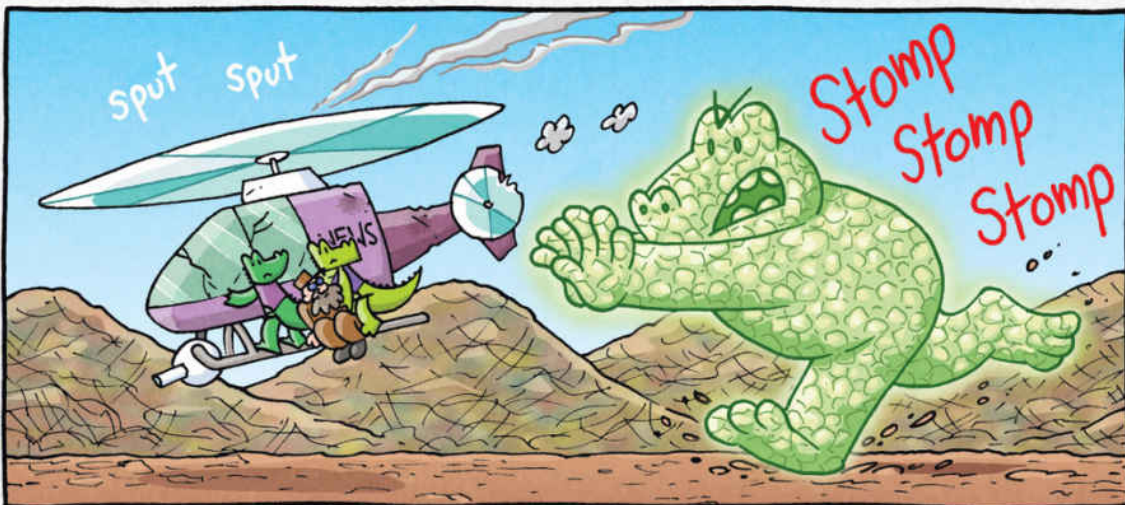
Dr. Hardbones!
Are you all right?

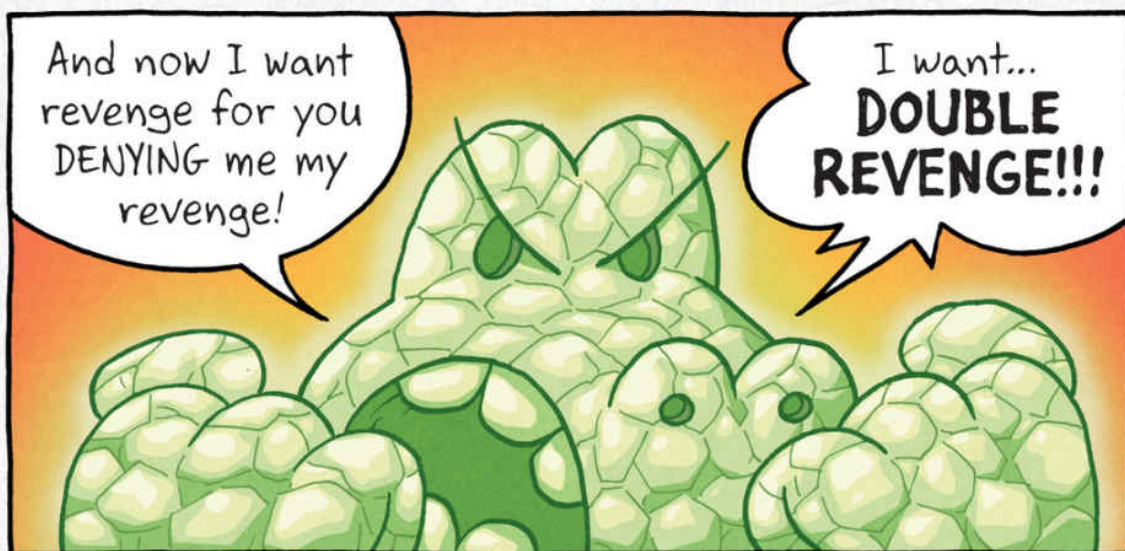
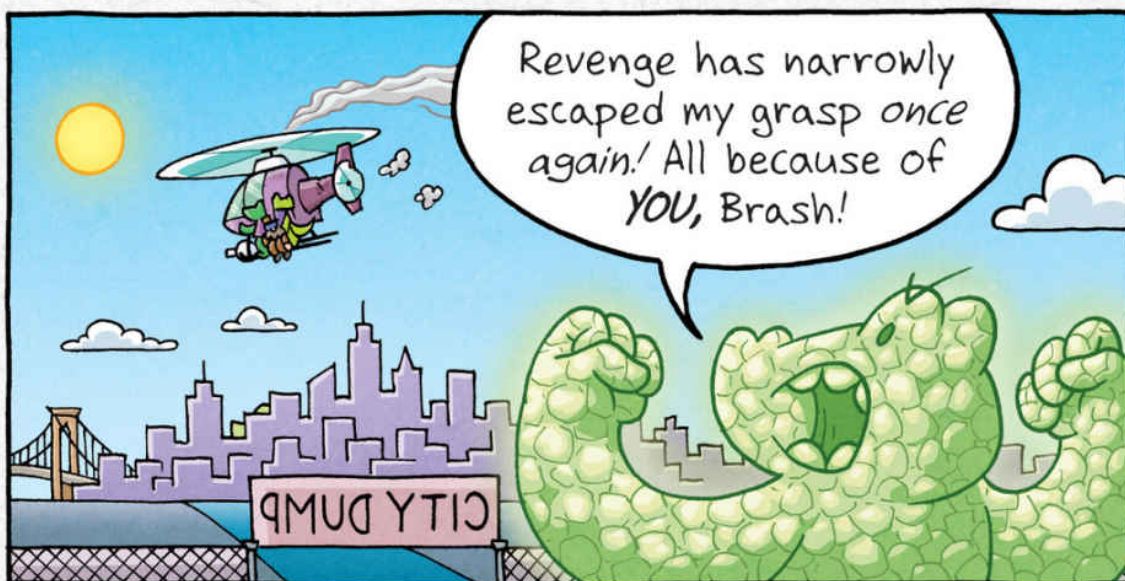
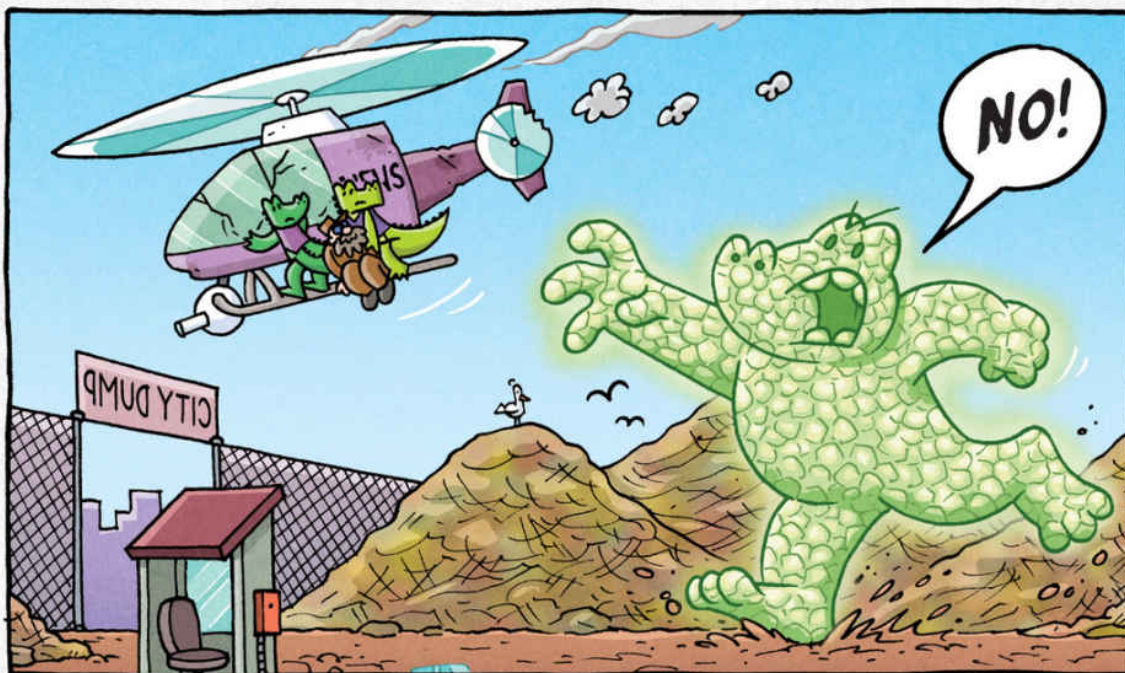
oog...





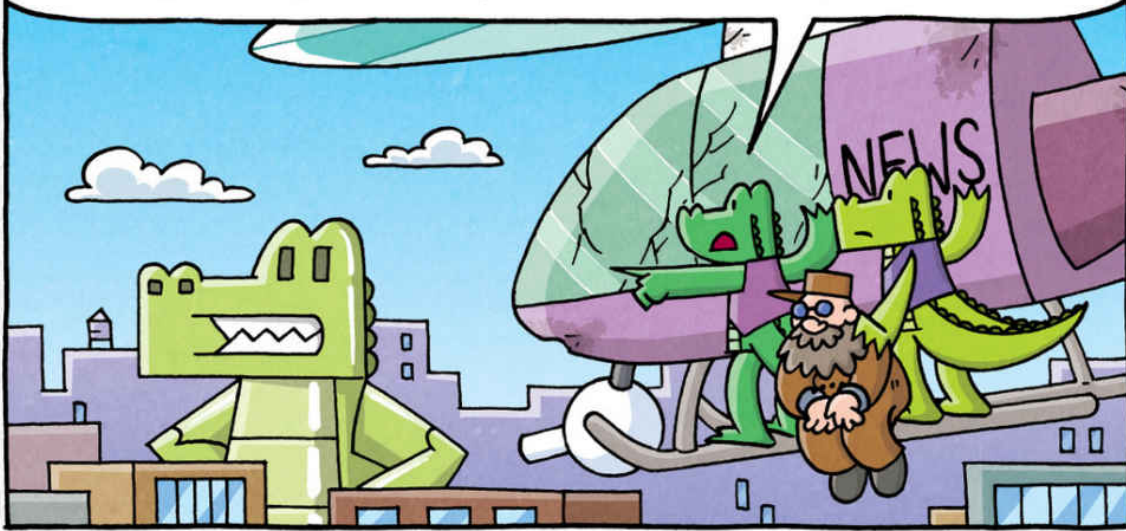




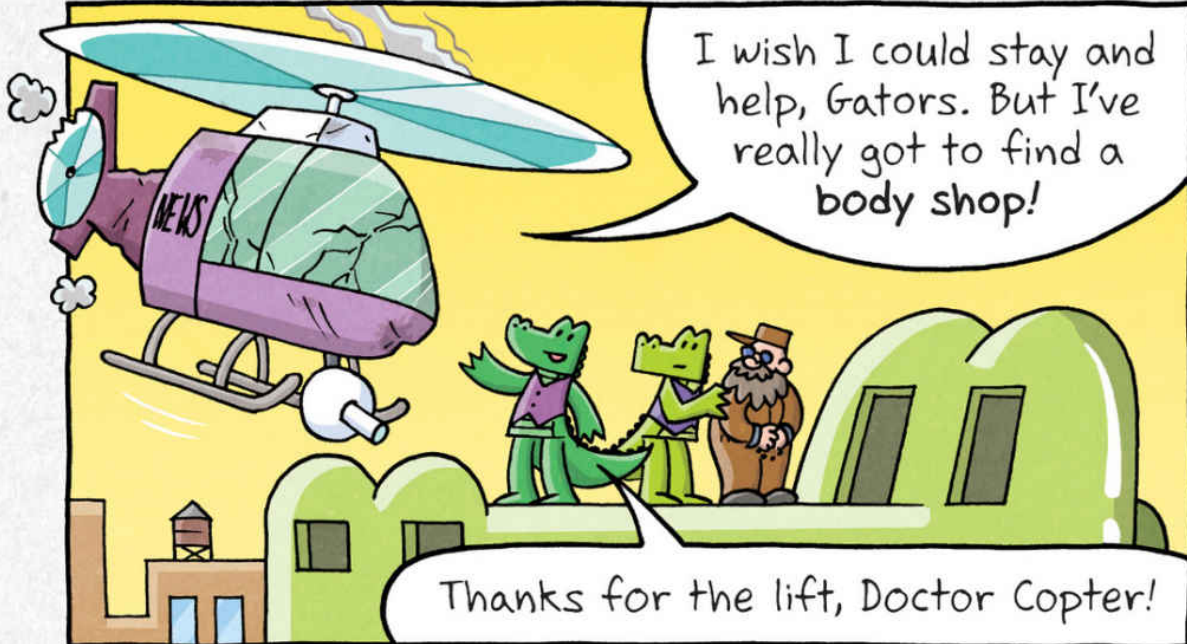


Chapter 16

Drop us off at our **InvestiQuarters**! It should be strong enough to keep Rockodile at bay for a while.

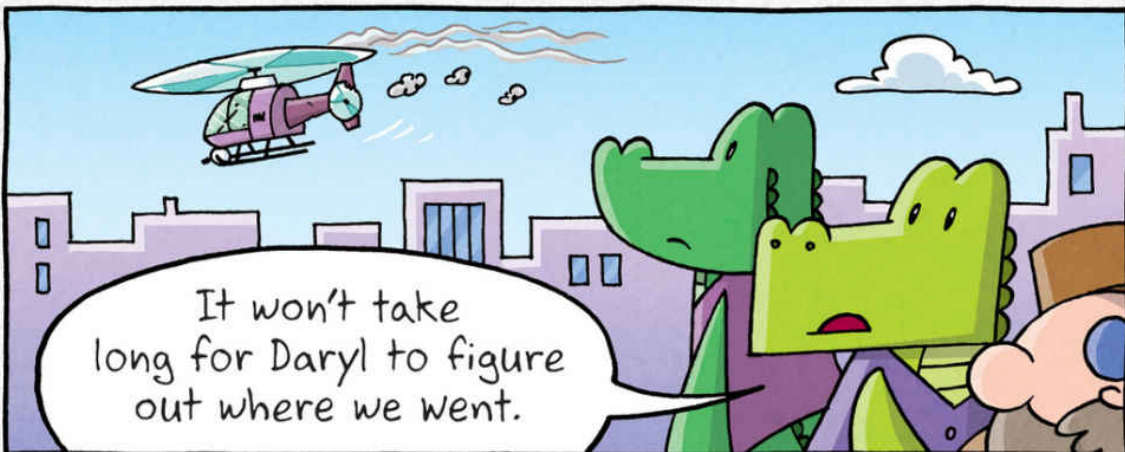


I wish I could stay and help, Gators. But I've really got to find a body shop!



Thanks for the lift, Doctor Copter!

It won't take long for Daryl to figure out where we went.



Welcome back, InvestiGators! Who wants tea and crumpets?

Ooh, I do!

YOU GET NOTHING!

C-ORB! D-ORB! Stay out here
and keep your
eyes open for
Rockodile!

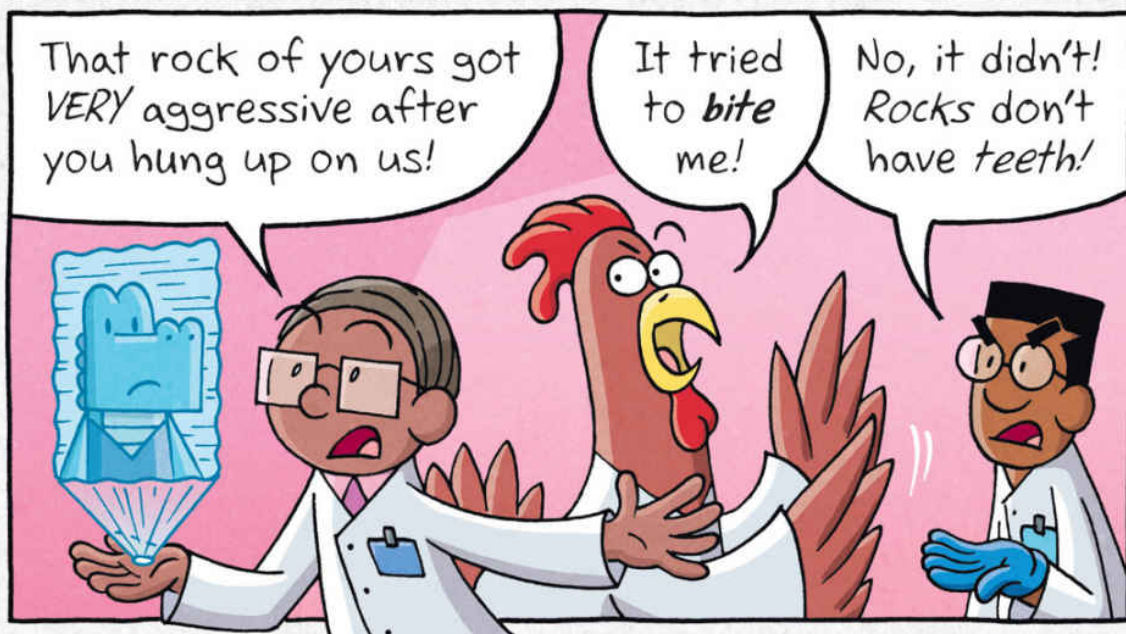
Rocko WHO?

You'll know him
when you see him!

scratch
scratch

I'll take this.

YOINK!



Once the **toxic waste** is removed, your Boulder Buddy should, well... **DIE.**

I...understand, Doc.

Just do whatever it takes and get here as quickly as you can!



Now, while the scientists work up their solution, it's time for *YOU* to talk trash. And by "trash" I mean tell us how you went from a **baker** to a **dump operator** working for the mob. *Spill the beans.*



Unless they're licorice jellybeans, 'cause **BLECH!**

I had nothing to do with any of this! I'm just a **scapegoat!**



You're not a **goat!** And there's no **escape!**



**BARE
YOUR SOUL,
SAUL!**



Things started off great when I first opened my **cracker company**.

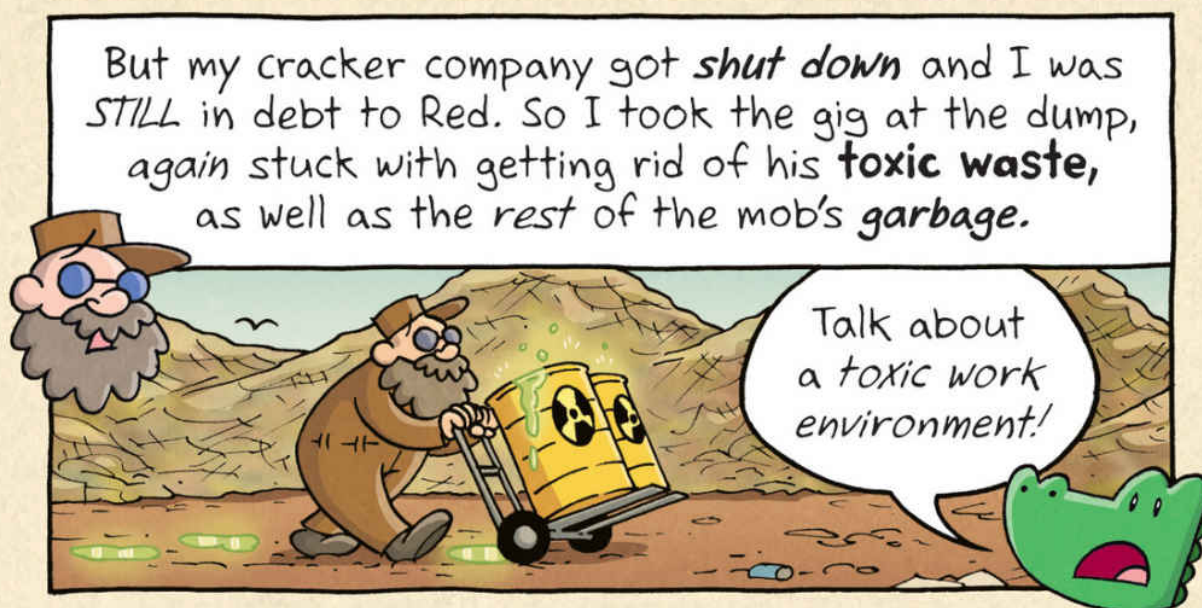
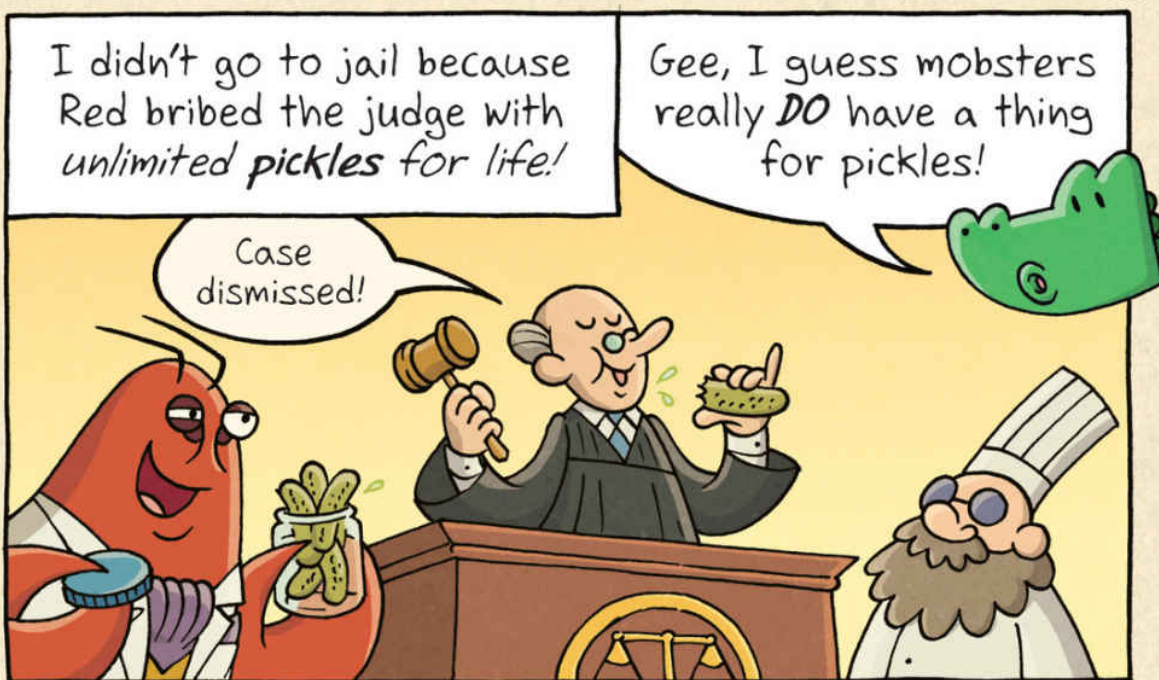
But eventually, things got tough, like overworked dough! **ACTUAL** dough, not **MONEY** dough. Not earning *enough* money dough was the *problem*!

So I cut corners everywhere I could. If I'd cut any **MORE** corners my *saltines* would've been *round*!



With no other option I made a shady deal with **Red Mobster**. In return for keeping my cracker company afloat, I had to dispose of the mob's **toxic waste**!

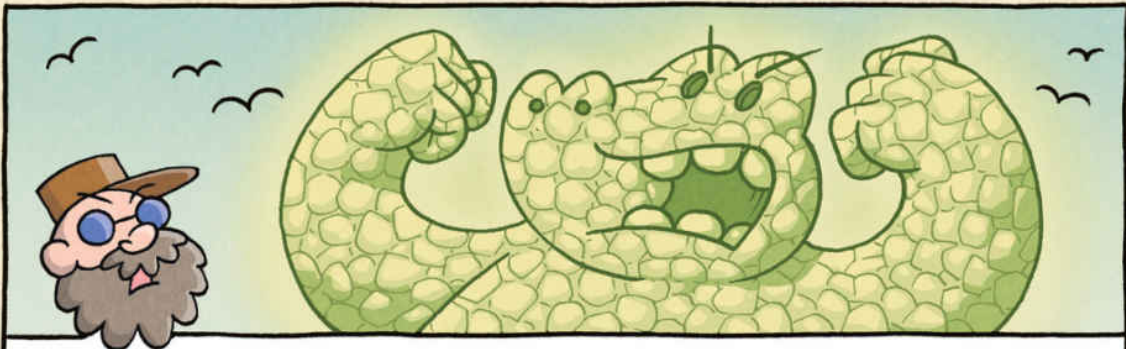




I had no idea your partner *survived* falling into that **radioactive saltine dough**, much less that he later got turned into a **stone waffle** whose crumbled remains ended up in the dump, only to soak up *EVEN MORE* of Red's toxic waste!



Anjie was a regular, always taking junk off my hands. How was I supposed to know a bunch of **glowing rocks** she found would be so problematic?



This **Rockodile** might be right to hold a grudge. Maybe it is my fault that he turned *into* a monster. But he's the one who chooses to **ACT** like a monster.

He's right. Saul didn't kidnap anyone. Or flood the city.
Or rob a bank. Or form an evil supervillain group.
Daryl's the one who committed those crimes.



That doesn't mean *you're* getting
off scot-free, though!

You can learn a lot about someone going through
their garbage. And Red has *PLENTY* of it! I'll tell you
everything else I know, if I can stay out of prison!

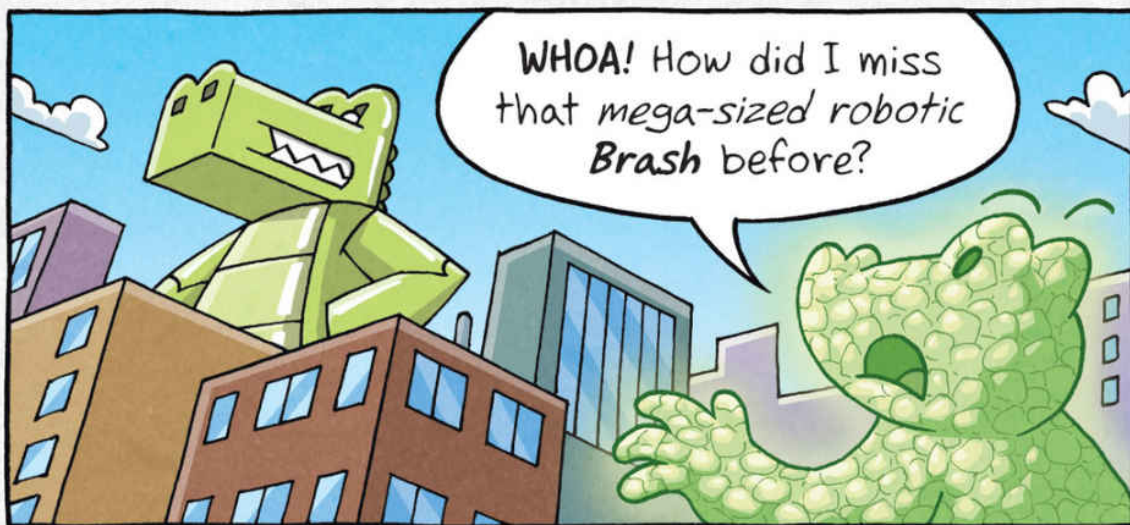


STAY OUT OF PRISON?

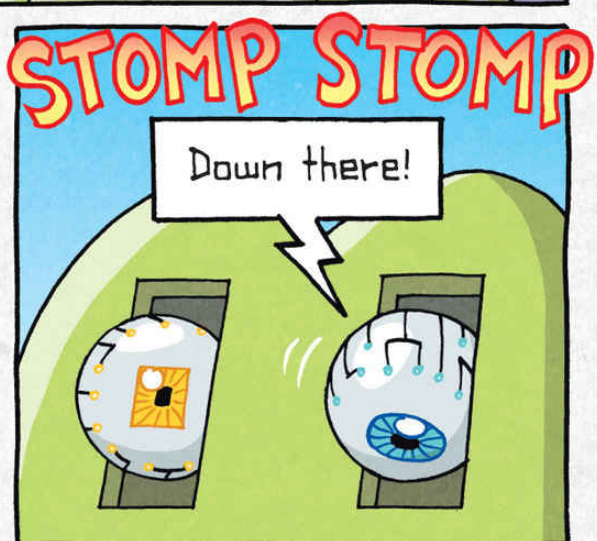
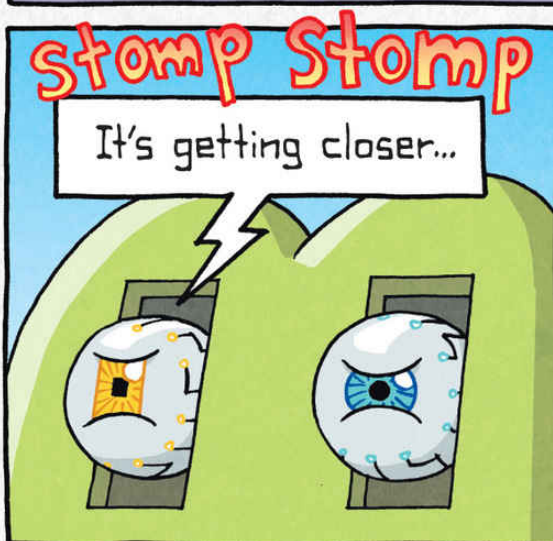
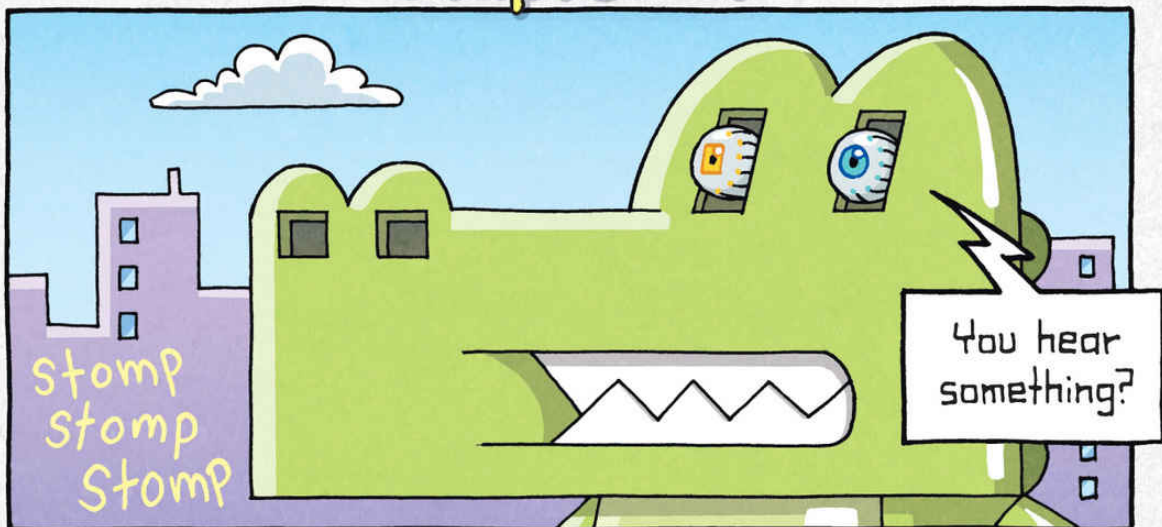
With Rockodile
after us, we'll
be lucky to stay
ALIVE!

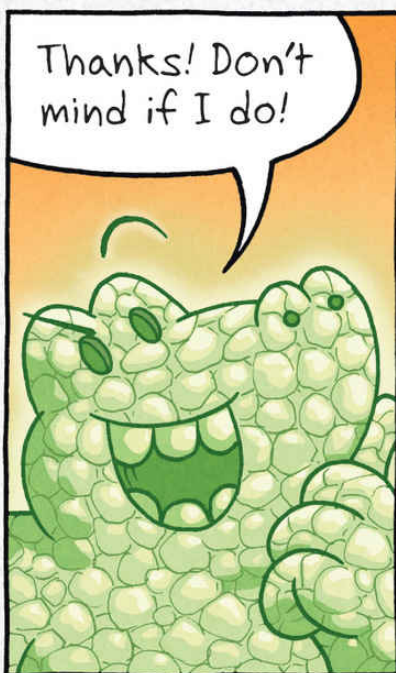
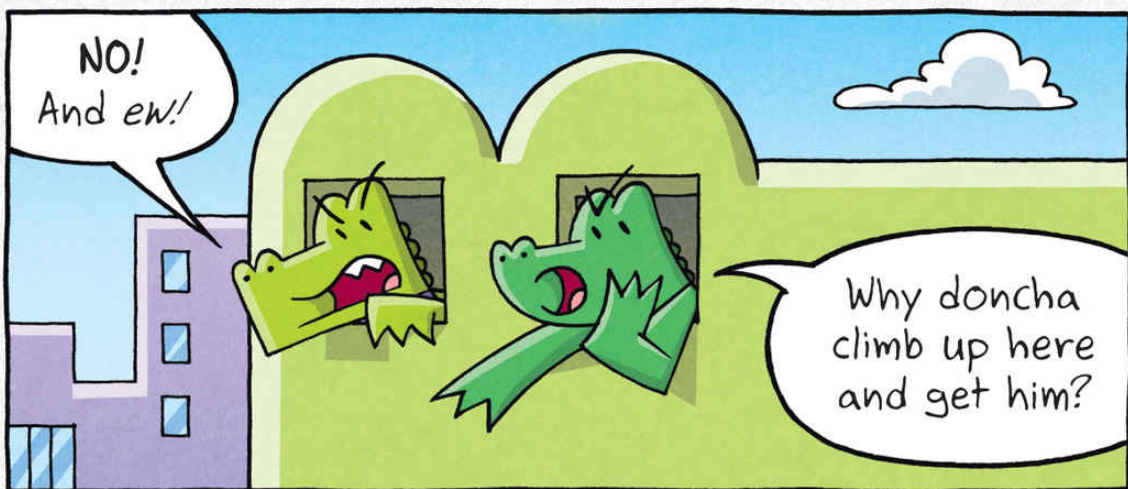
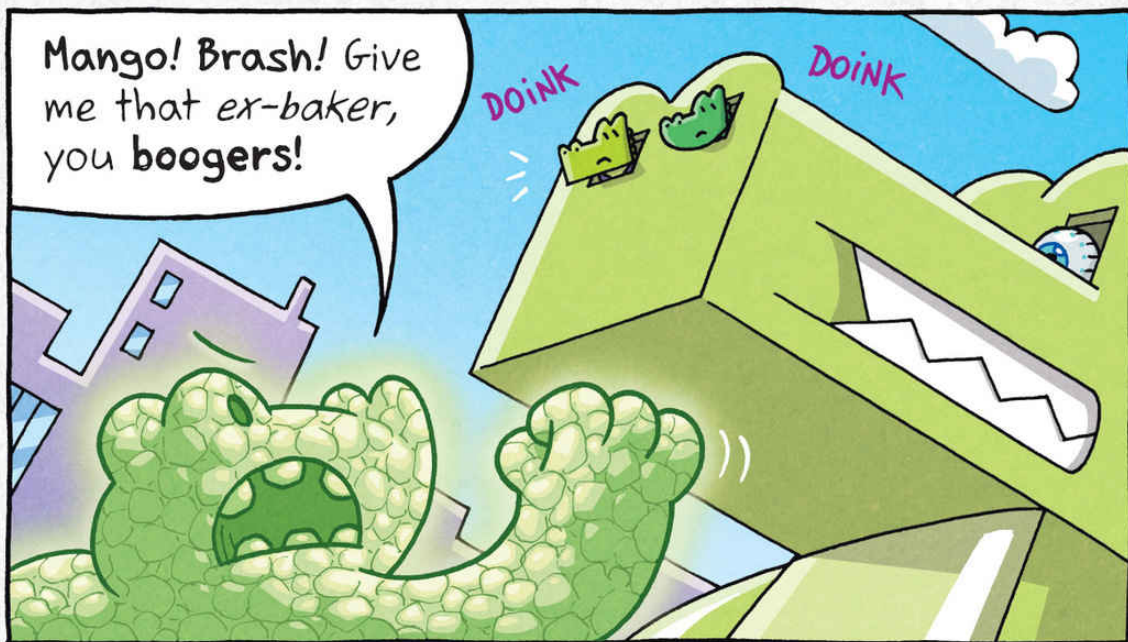
Daryl's **obsessed**.
Even if he manages
to destroy everyone he
blames for his predicament,
his **stone-cold thirst**
for revenge may **NEVER**
be quenched!





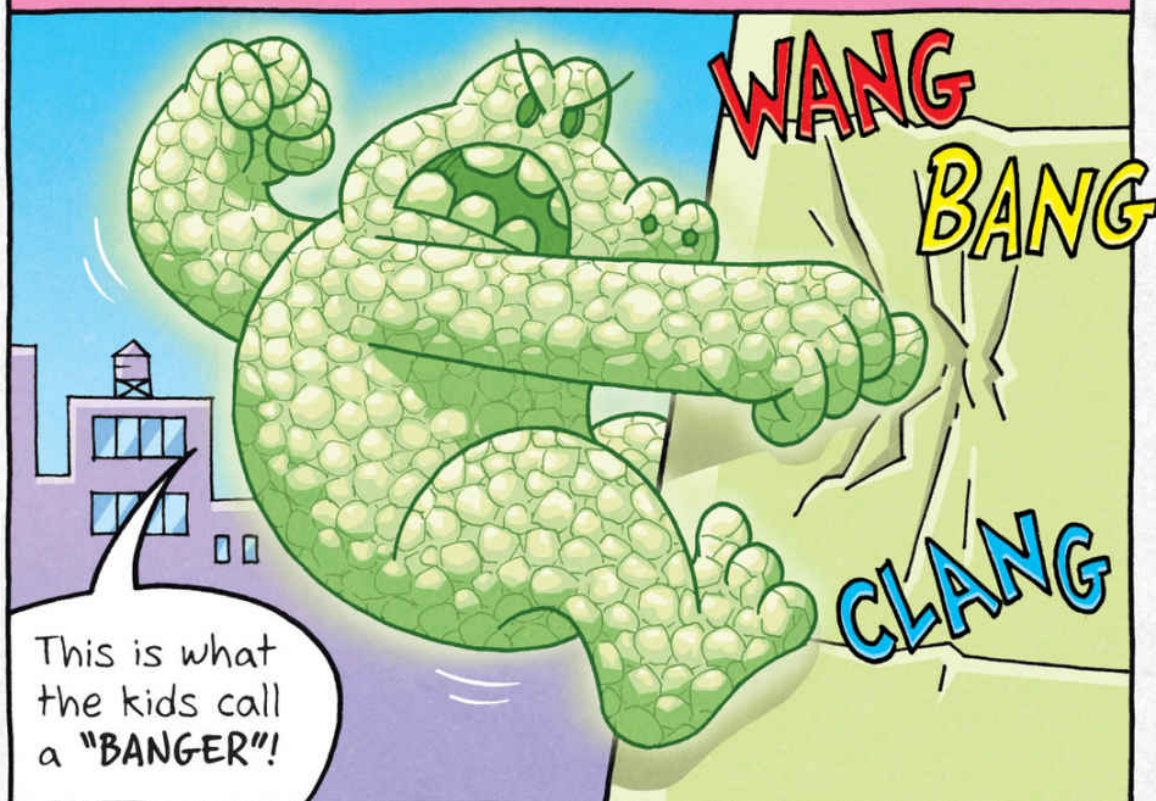
Chapter 17







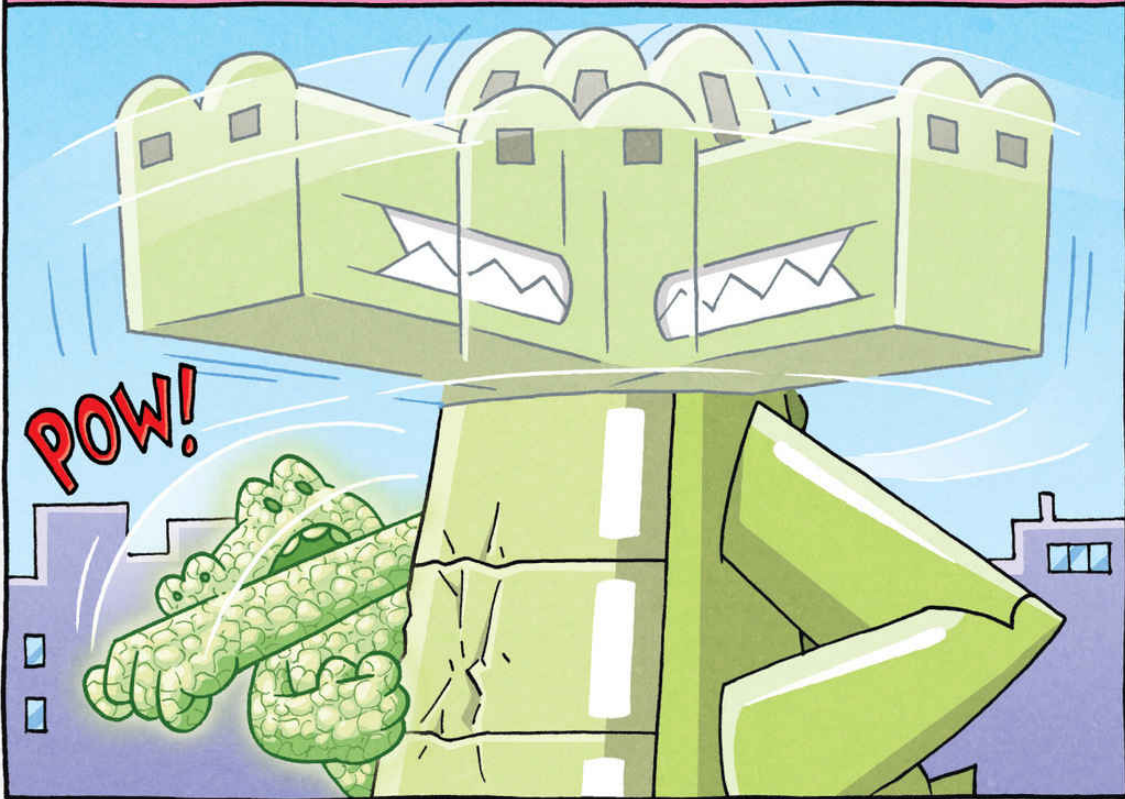
♪♪ The Gators can't stand these hits for long! ♪♪



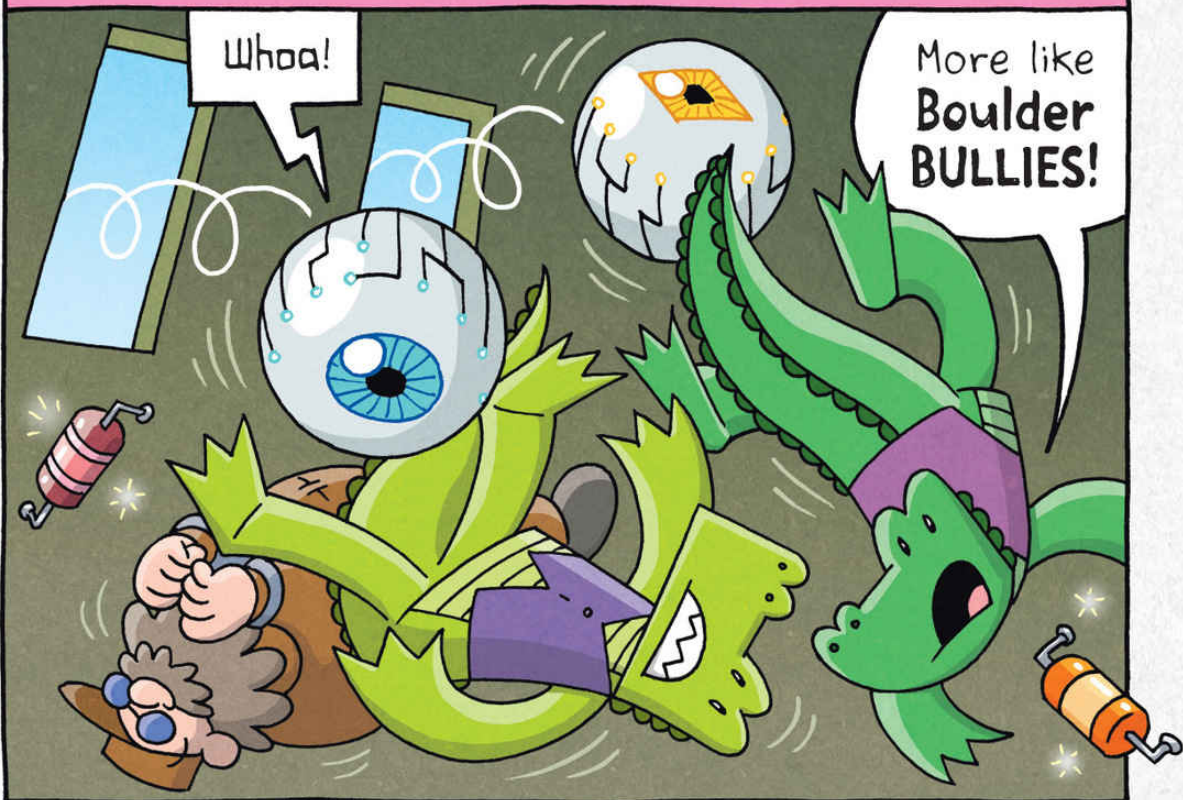
♪♪ So this montage sings a sad, sad song! ♪♪

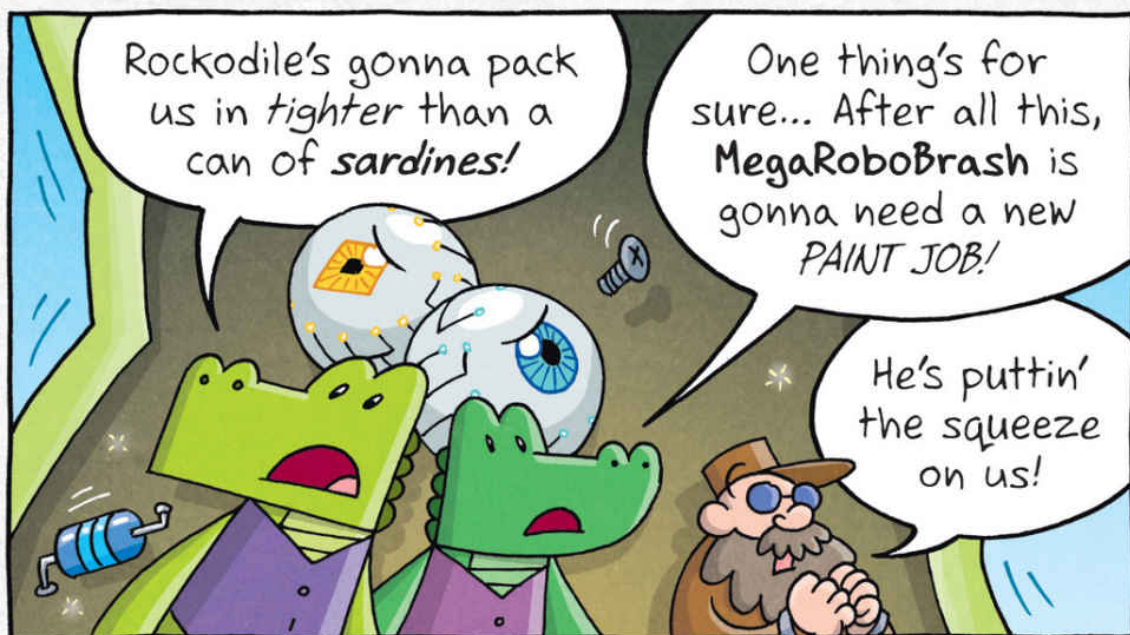
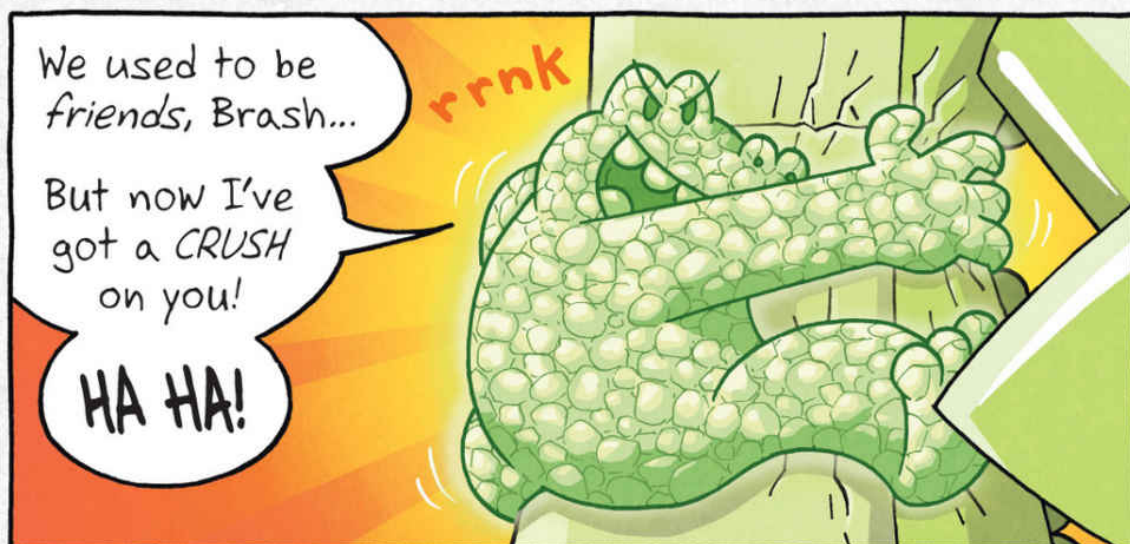
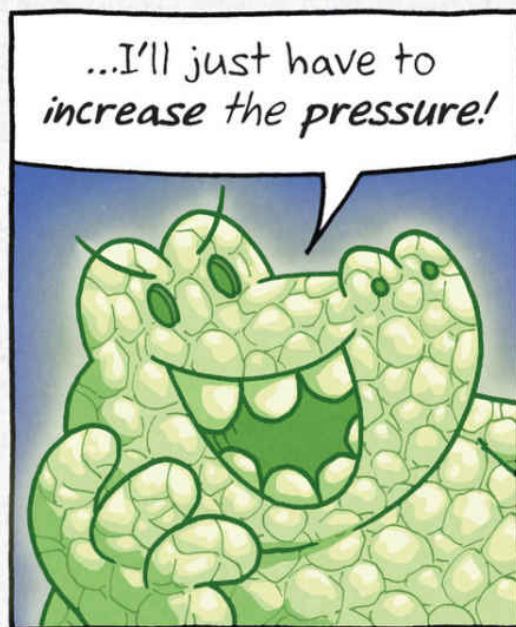
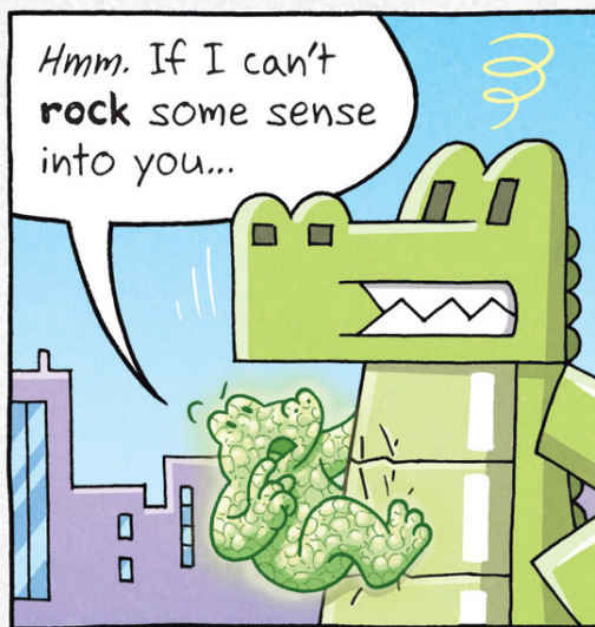


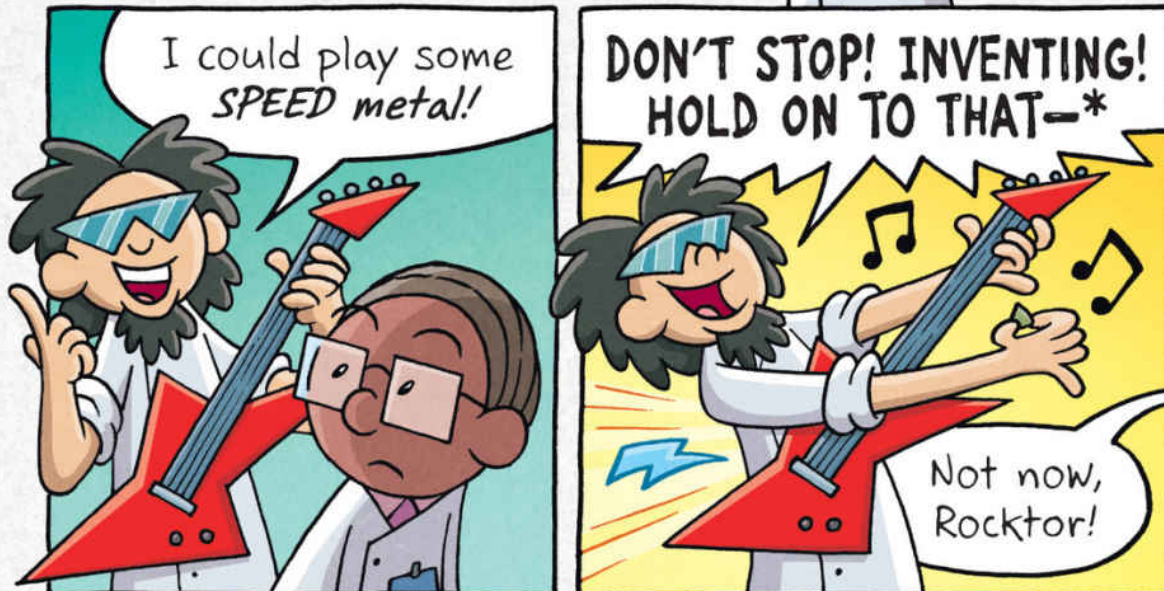
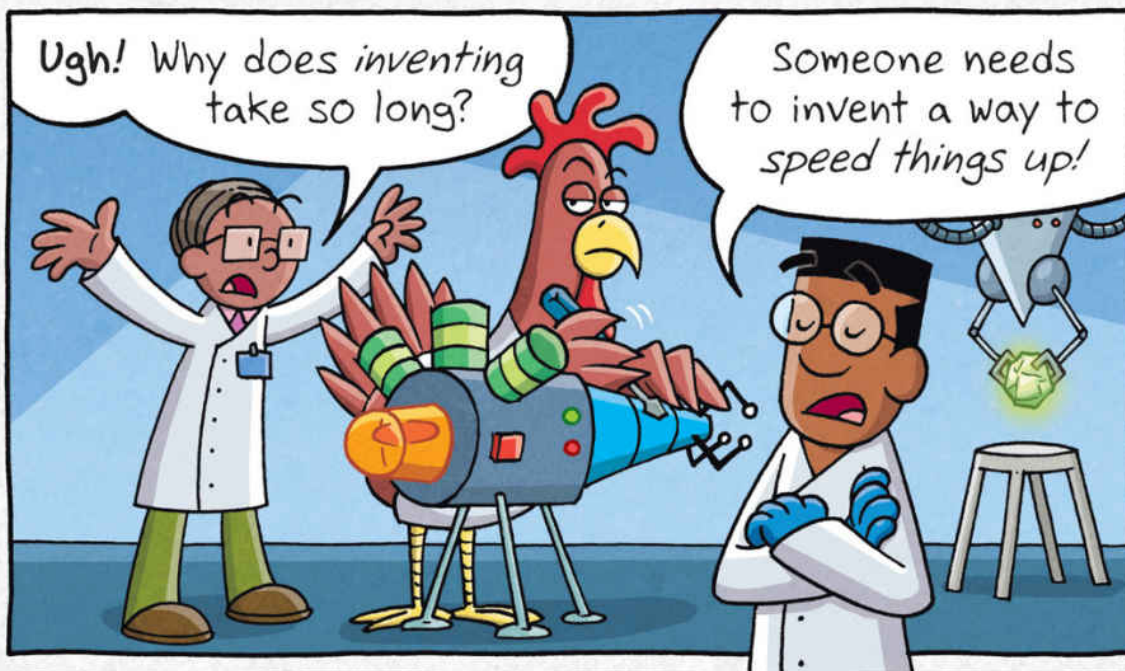
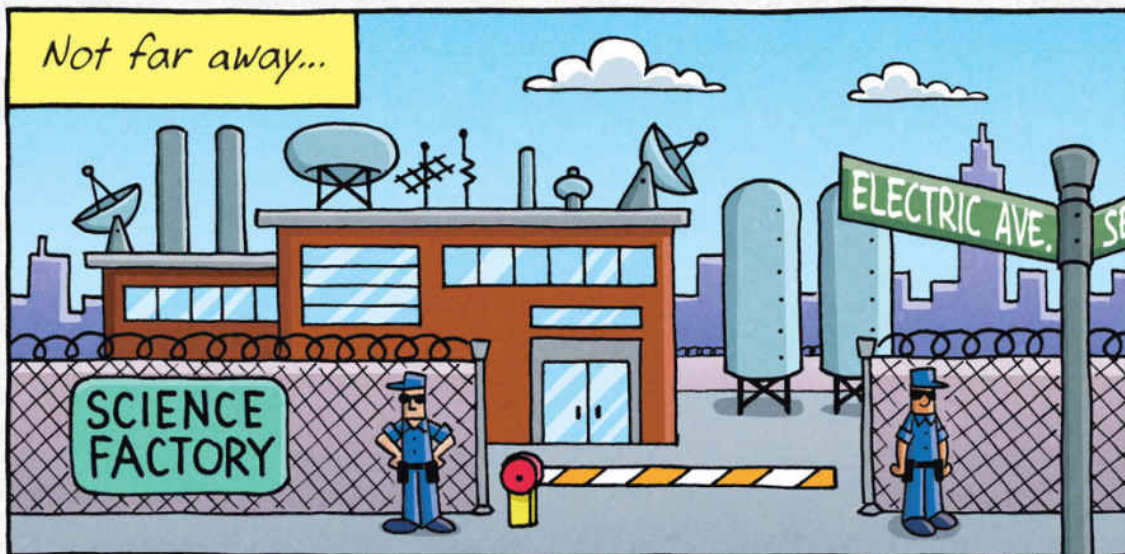
♪♪ These Boulder Buddies pack quite a punch! ♪♪



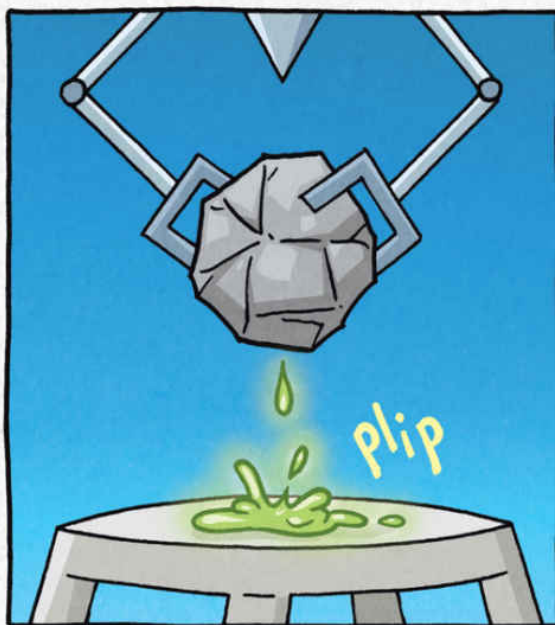
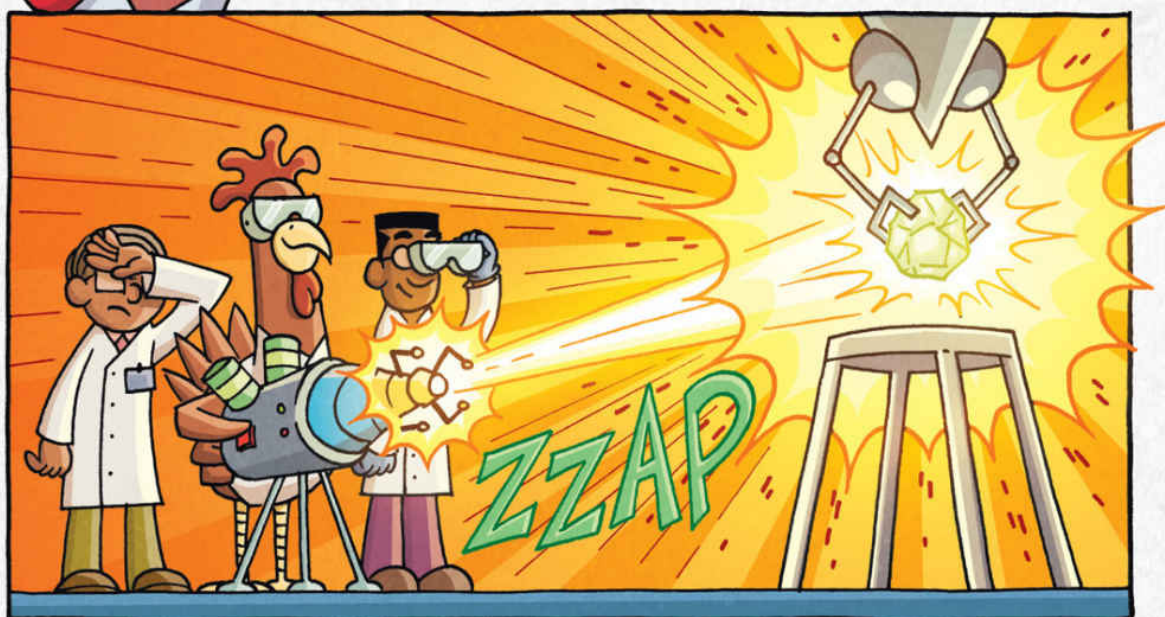
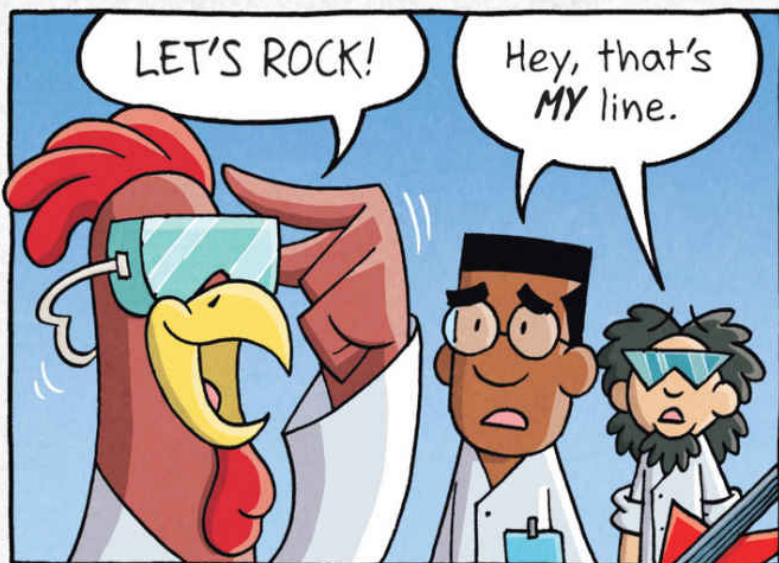
♪♪ And if they could, they'd steal your lunch! ♪

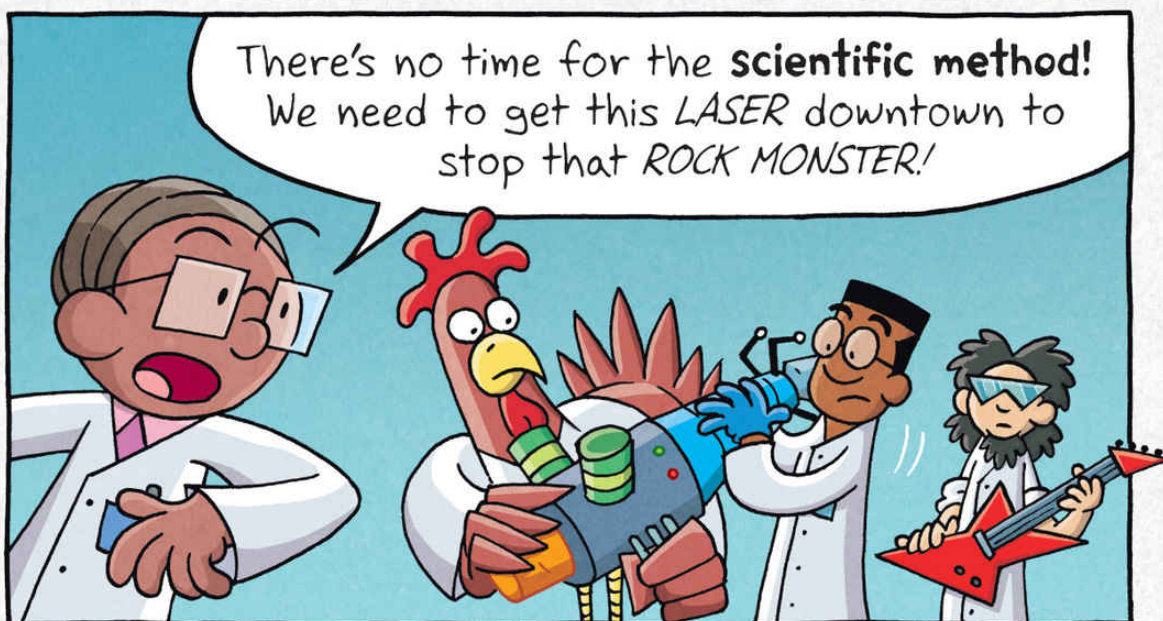
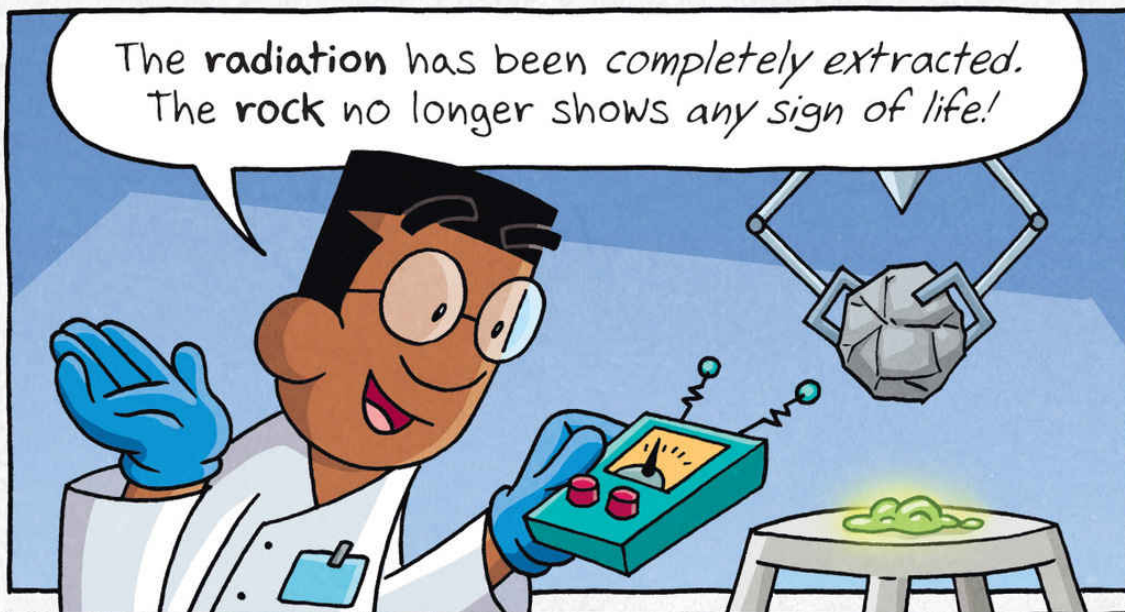


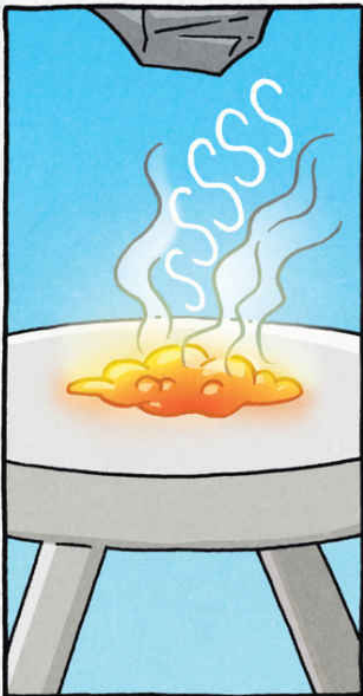
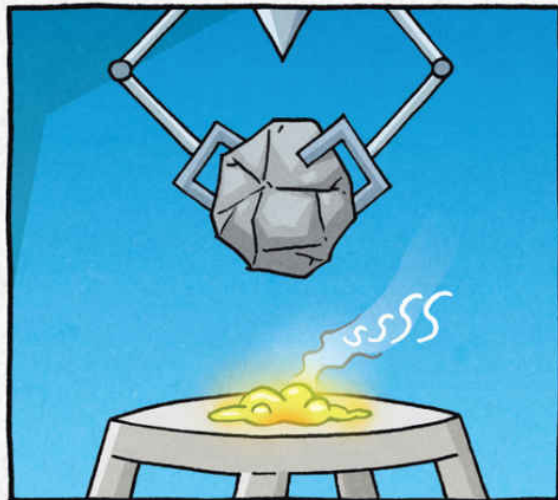
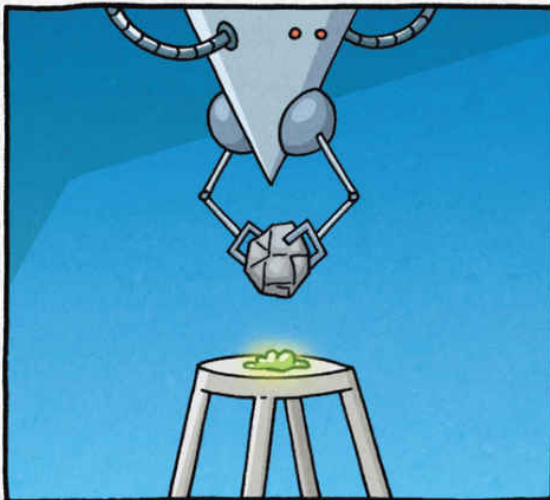




*Any song can be speed metal if you play it fast enough!







Chapter 18

This is Cici Boringstories, reporting for *Action News Now*. For viewers just tuning in, the Boulder Buddies have all combined into a giant monster called **ROCKODILE!**

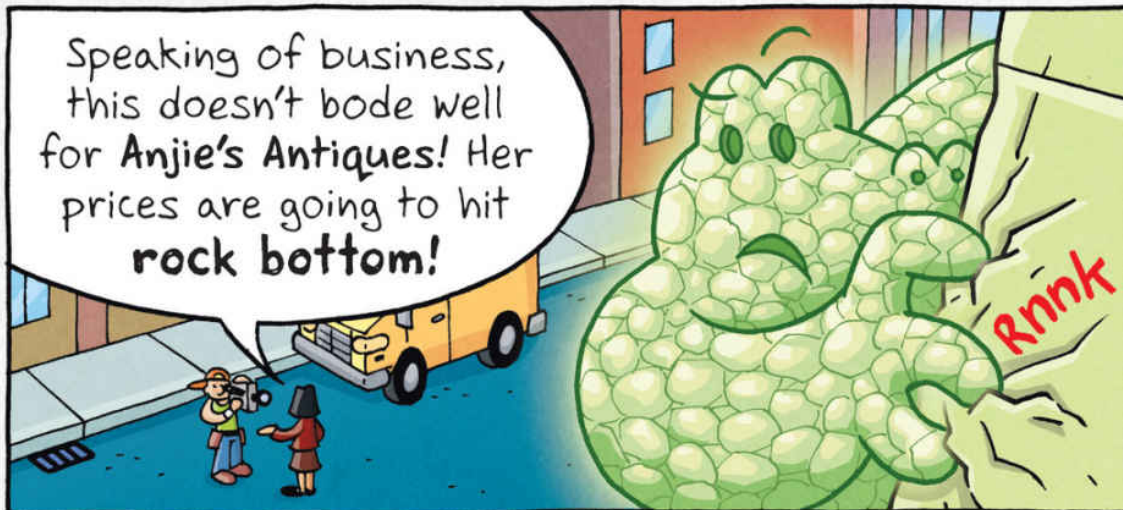


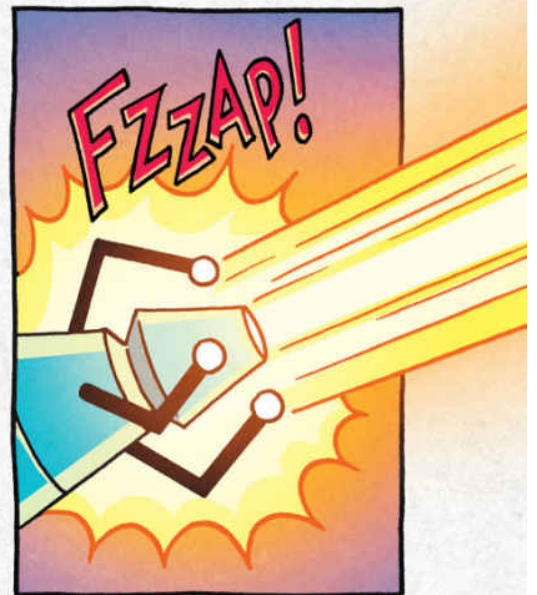
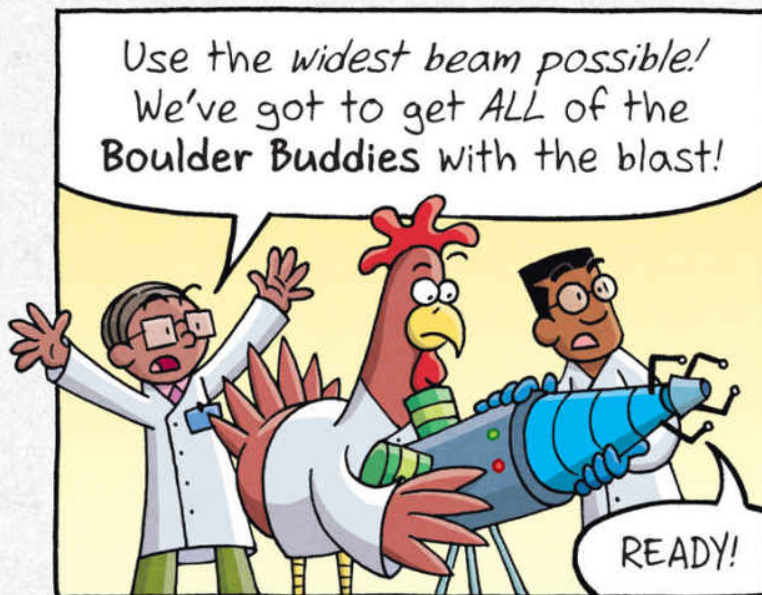
And he means *business!*

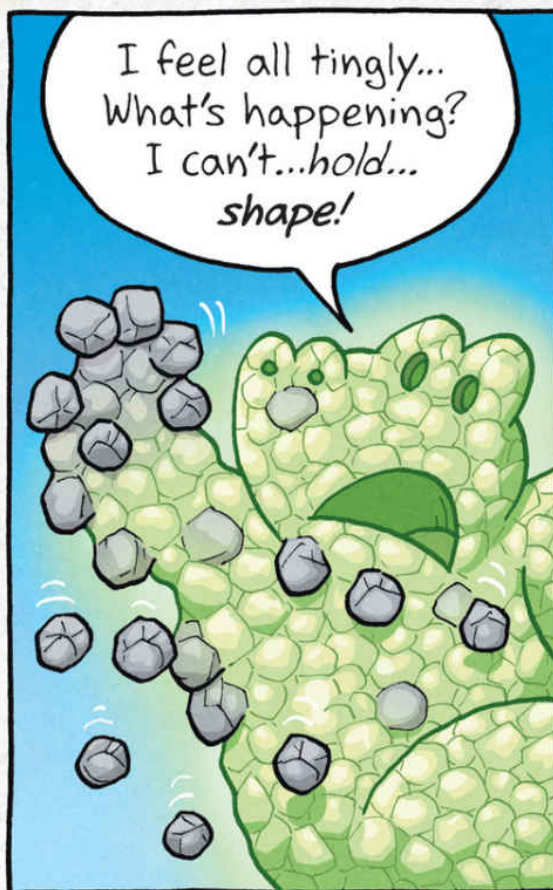
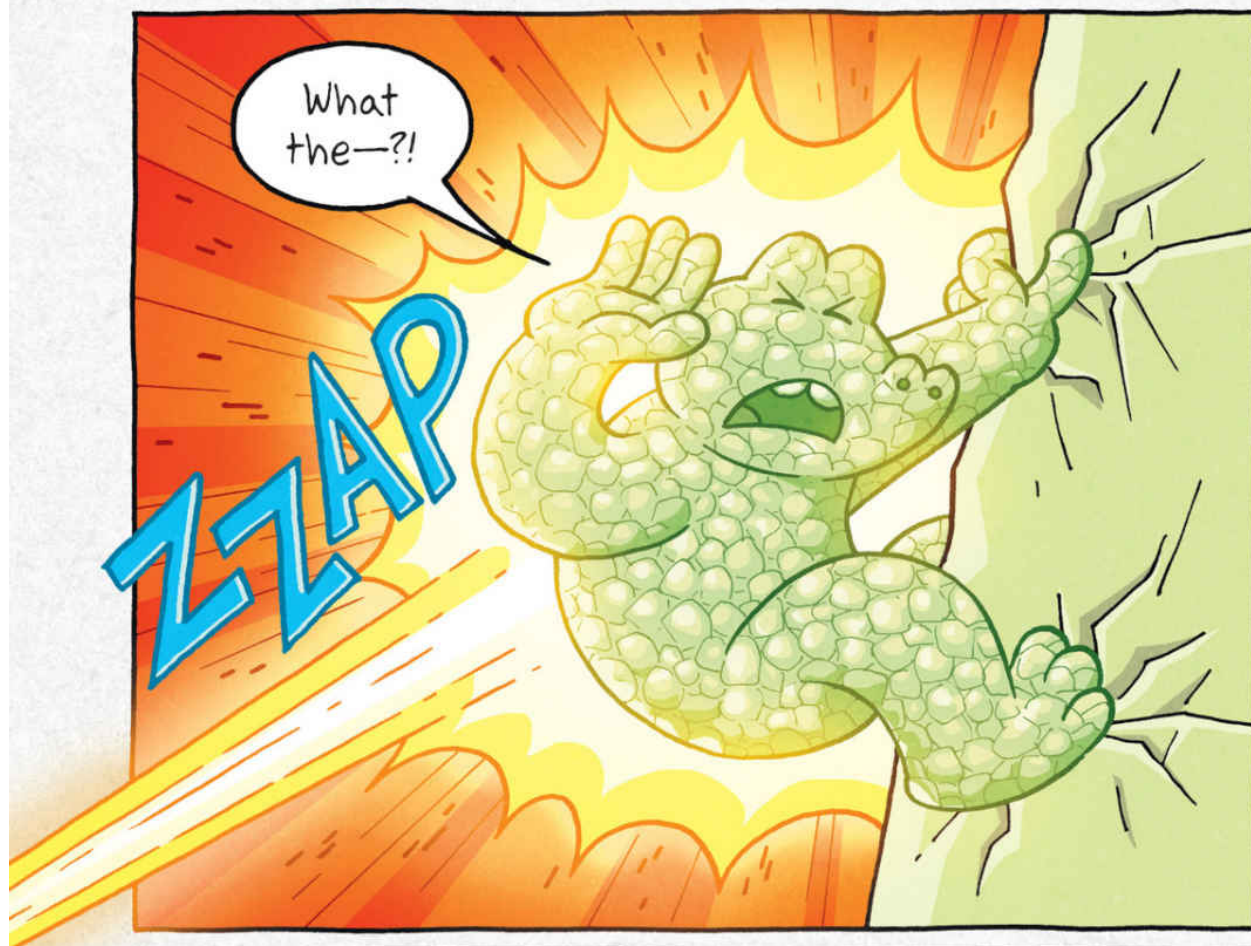
I can't believe I told Rocky our secret identities!

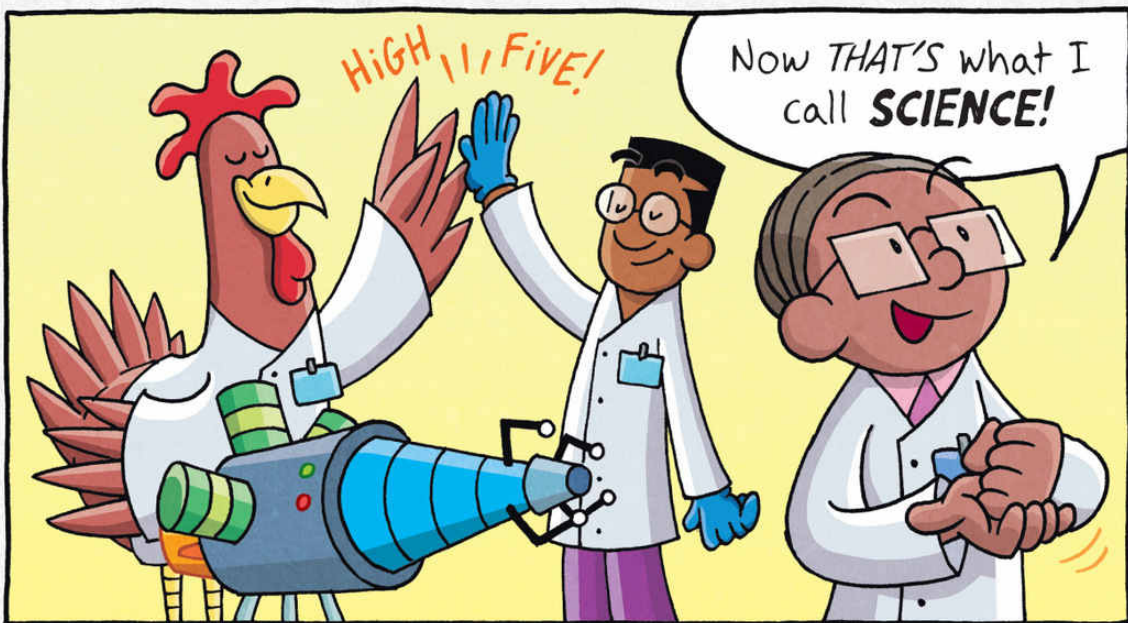
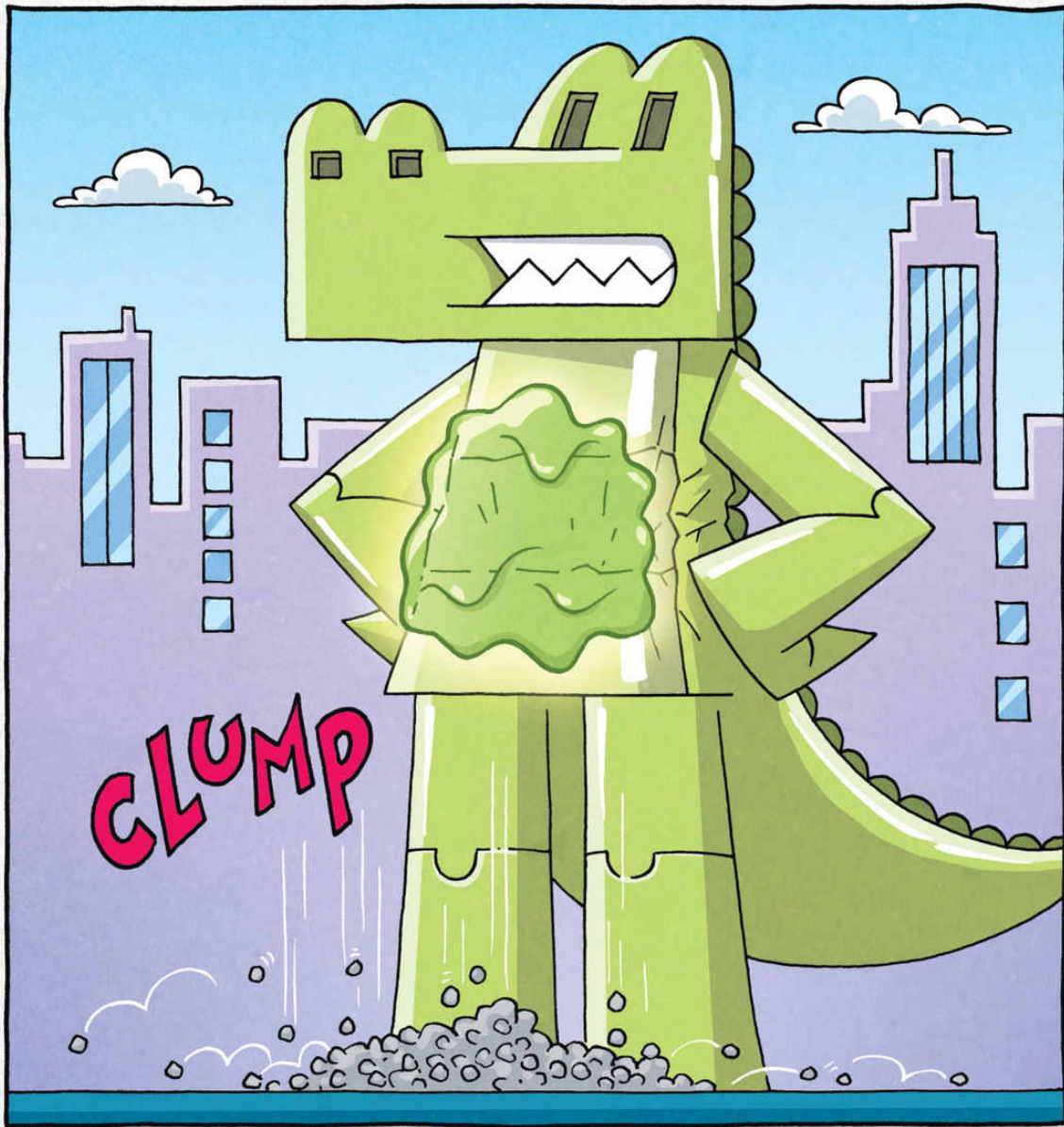


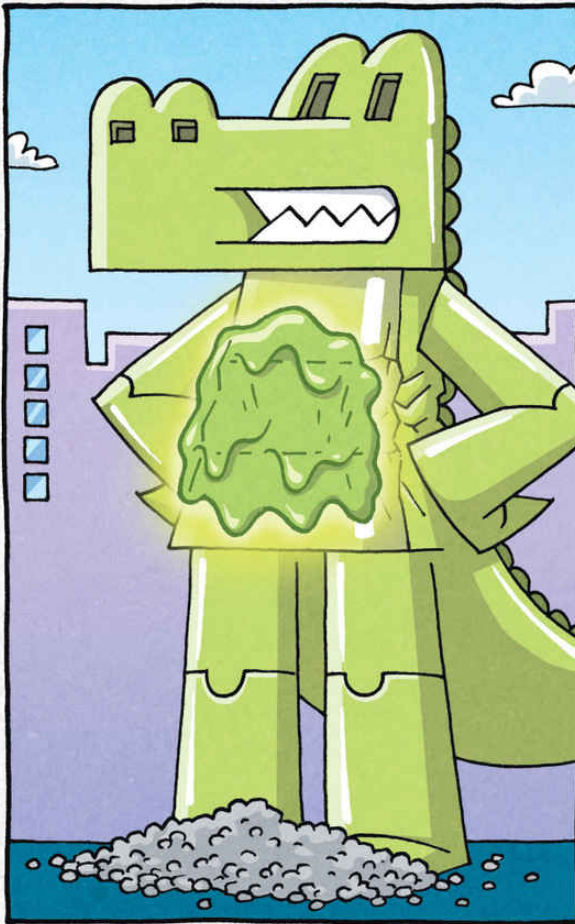
Speaking of business, this doesn't bode well for Anjie's Antiques! Her prices are going to hit **rock bottom!**







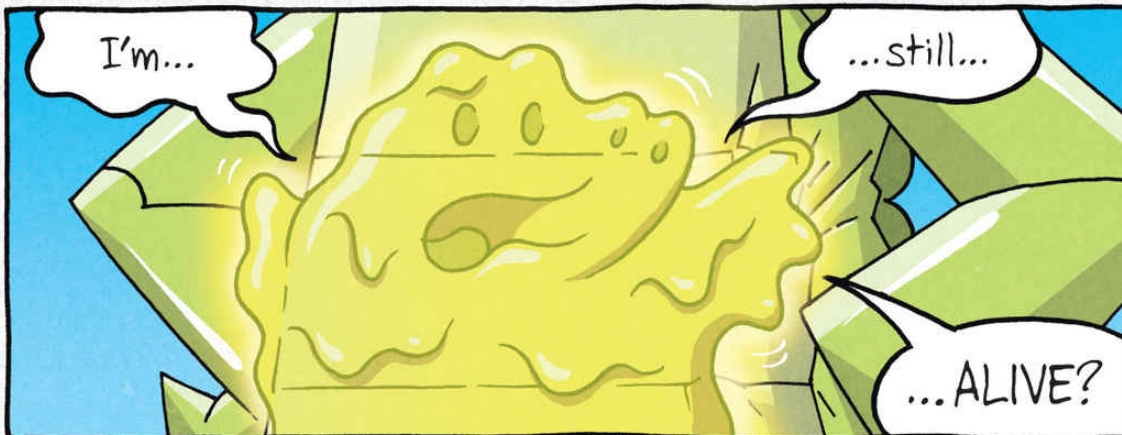




GATORS! The Boulder Buddies are no longer alive! They've fallen away and all that's left is radioactive goo.



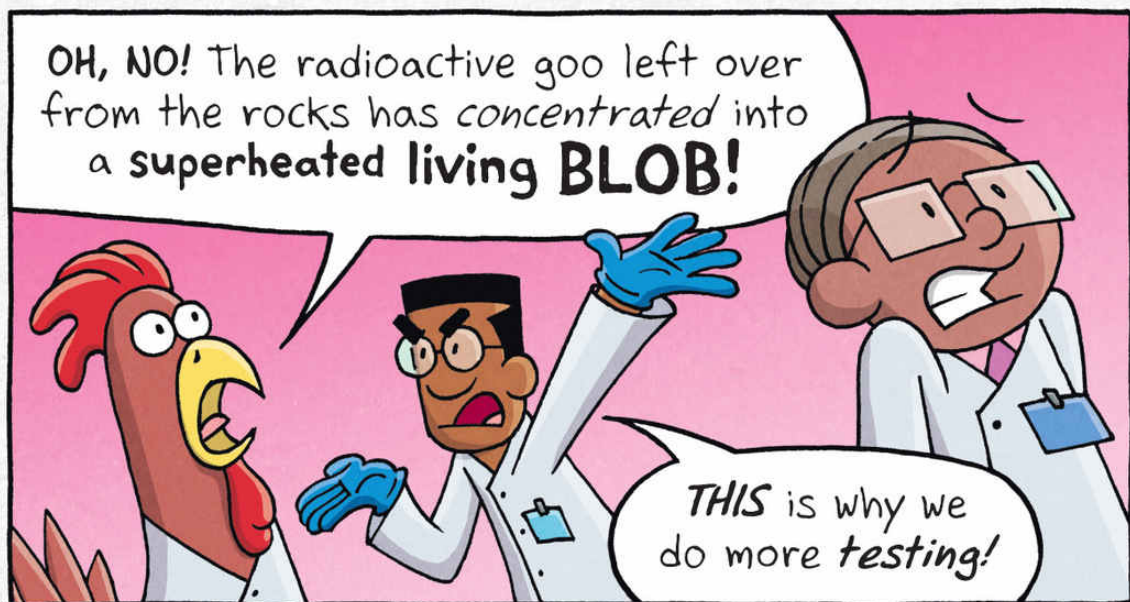
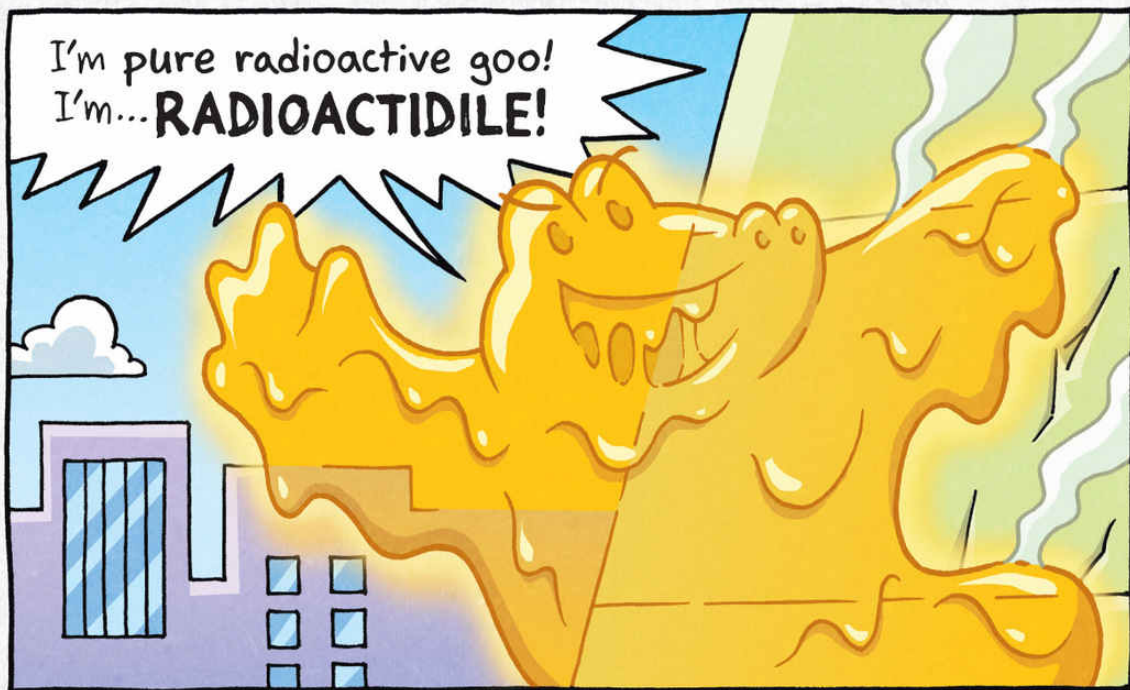
That's great, doctor!
Wait—radioactive goo?



I'm...

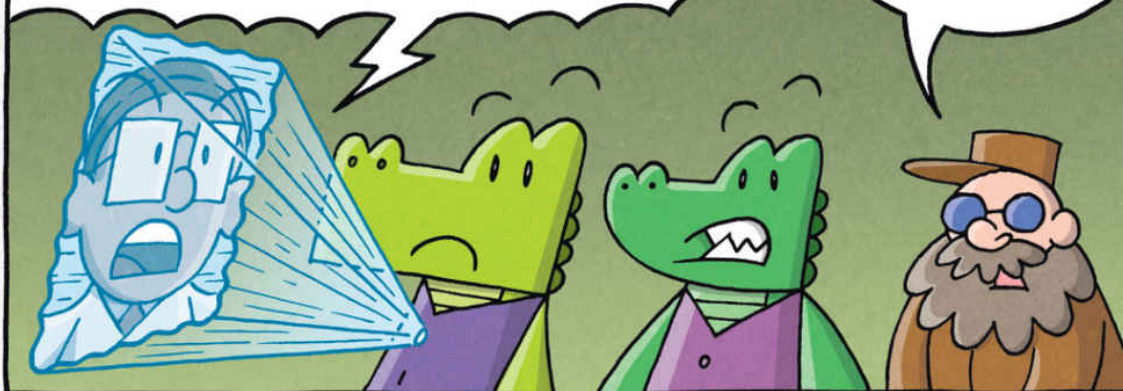
...still...

...ALIVE?



GATORS! The radioactive goo is *still* alive! And now the heat it's creating is going to melt right through the giant robot's *METAL EXTERIOR!*

Man, how'd I even end up in this mess?



Oh, right.

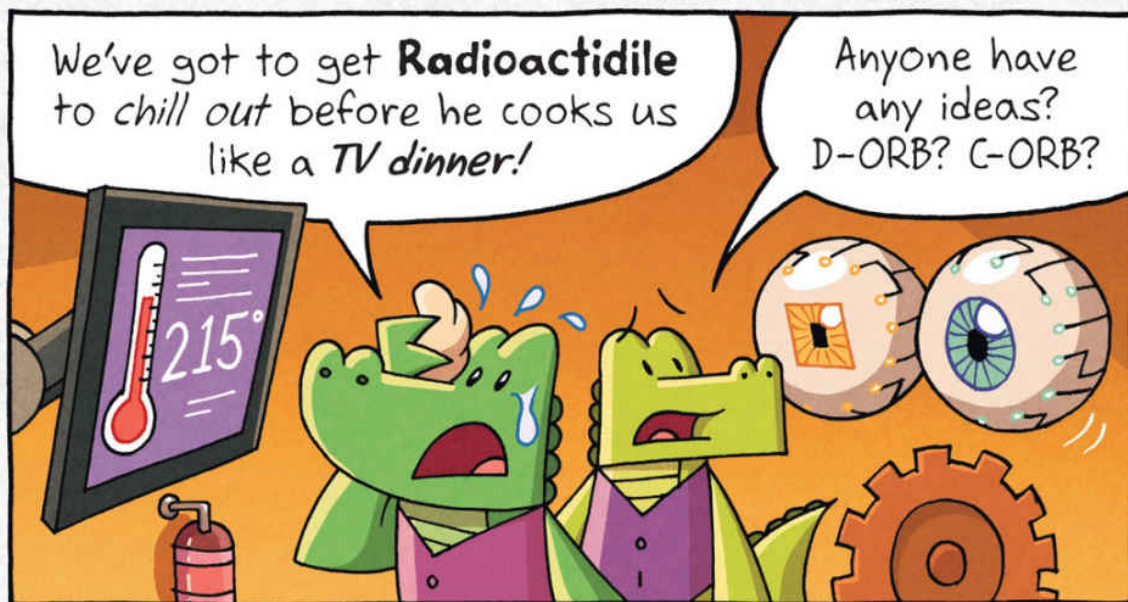


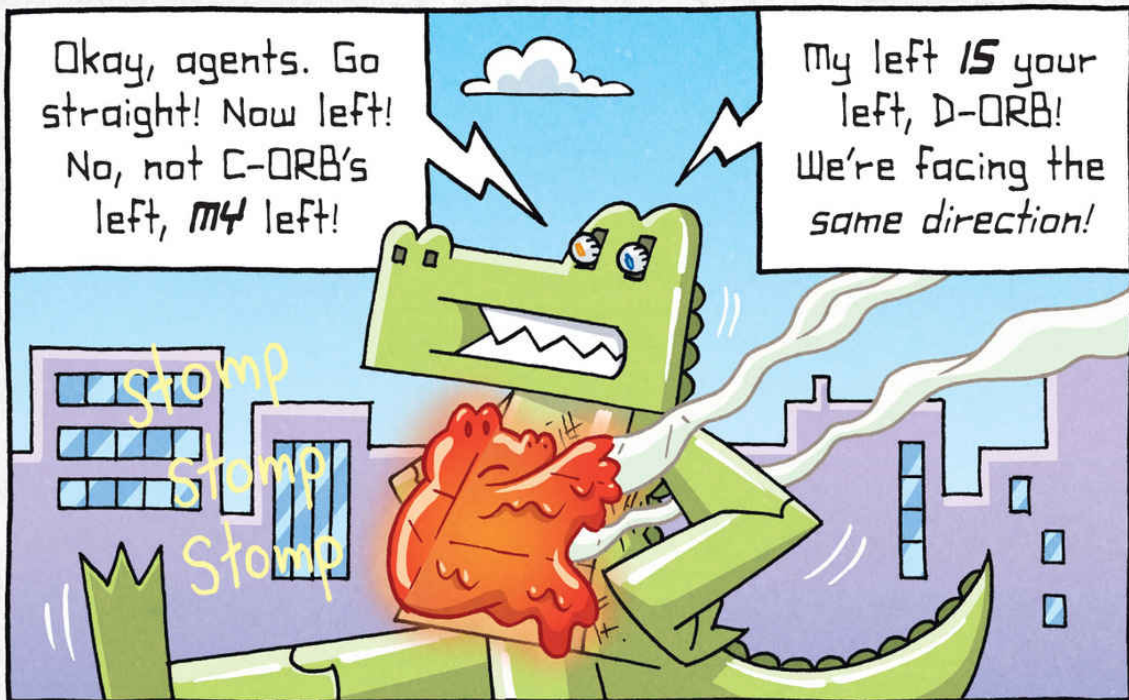
HA HA! I'm on FIRE!
YOU'RE on fire!

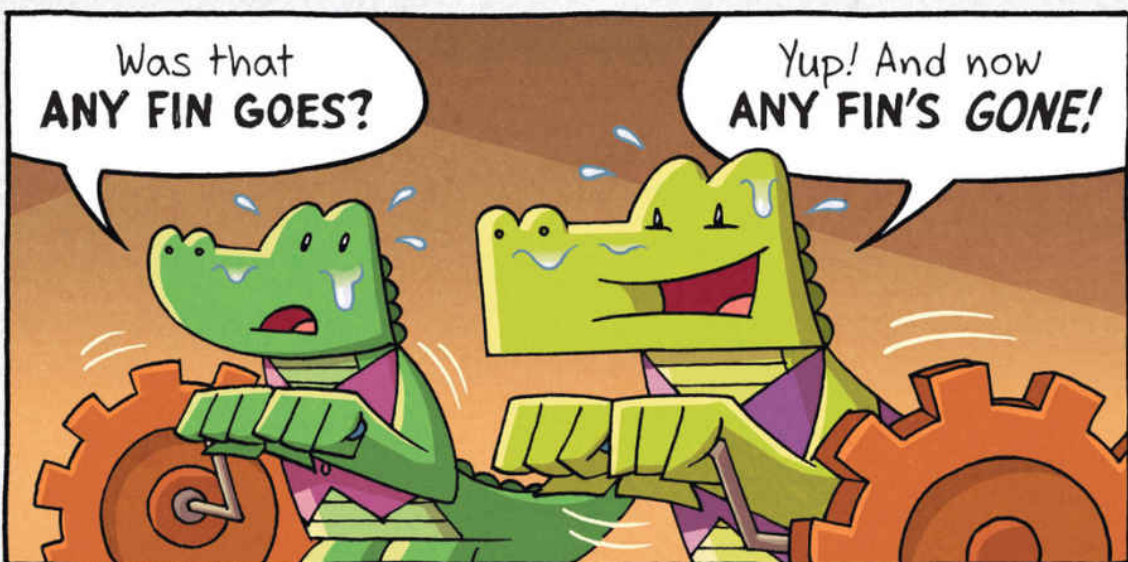
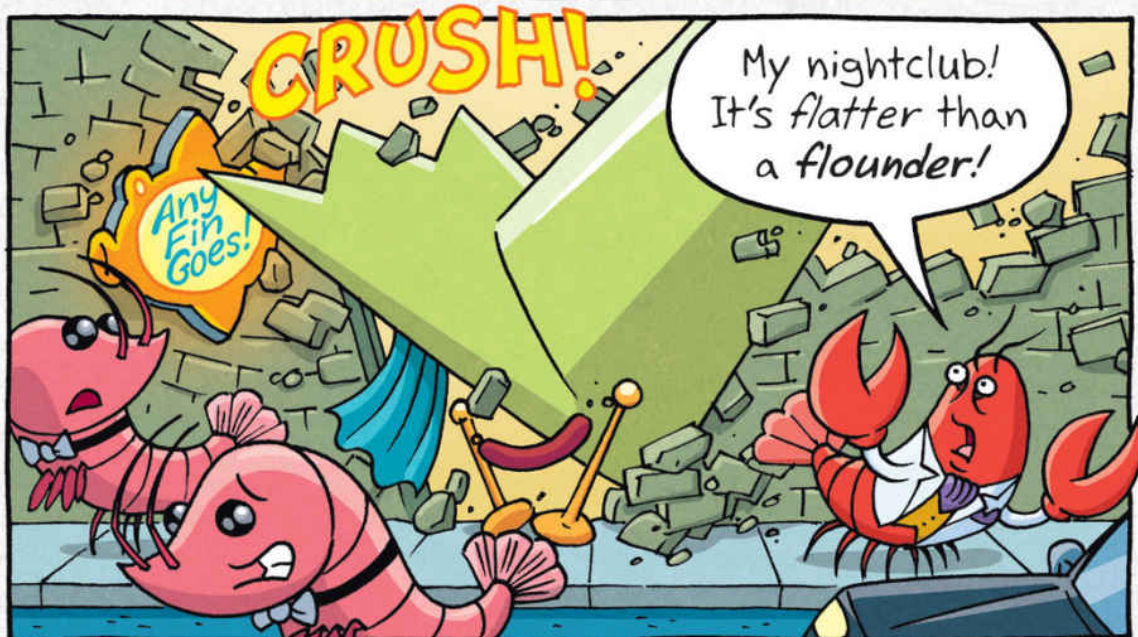
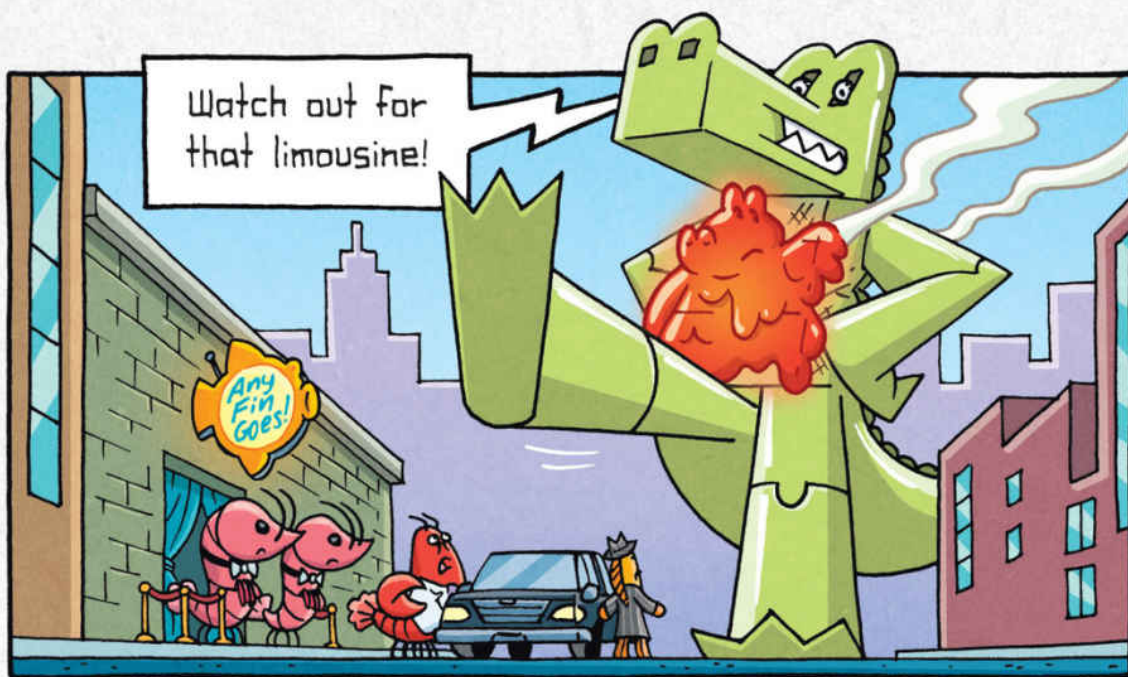
I'M UNSTOPPABLE!

I'll *stop* the
world and *melt*
with you!

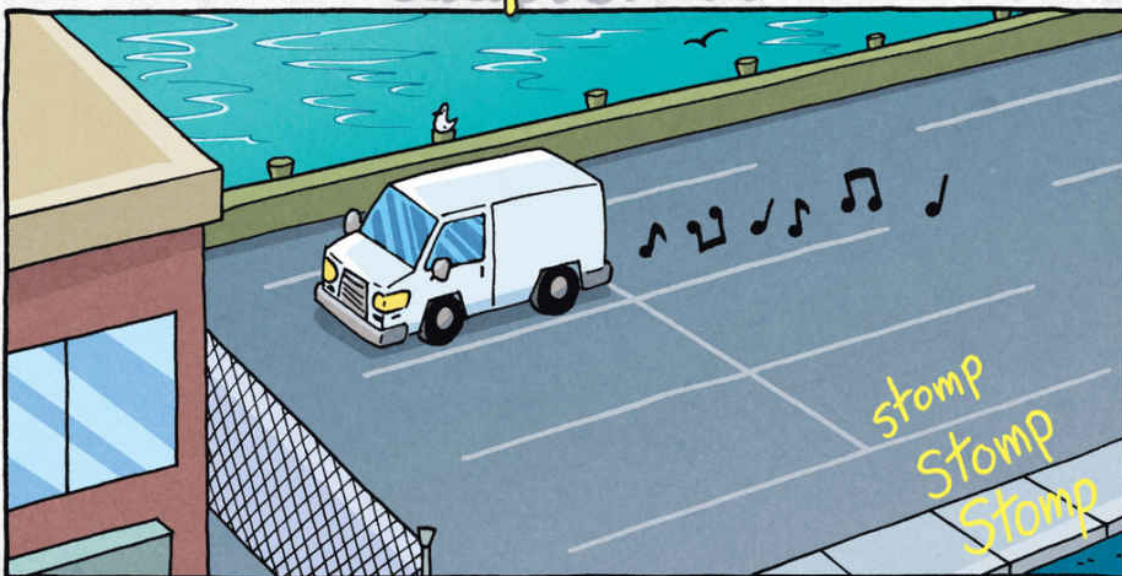


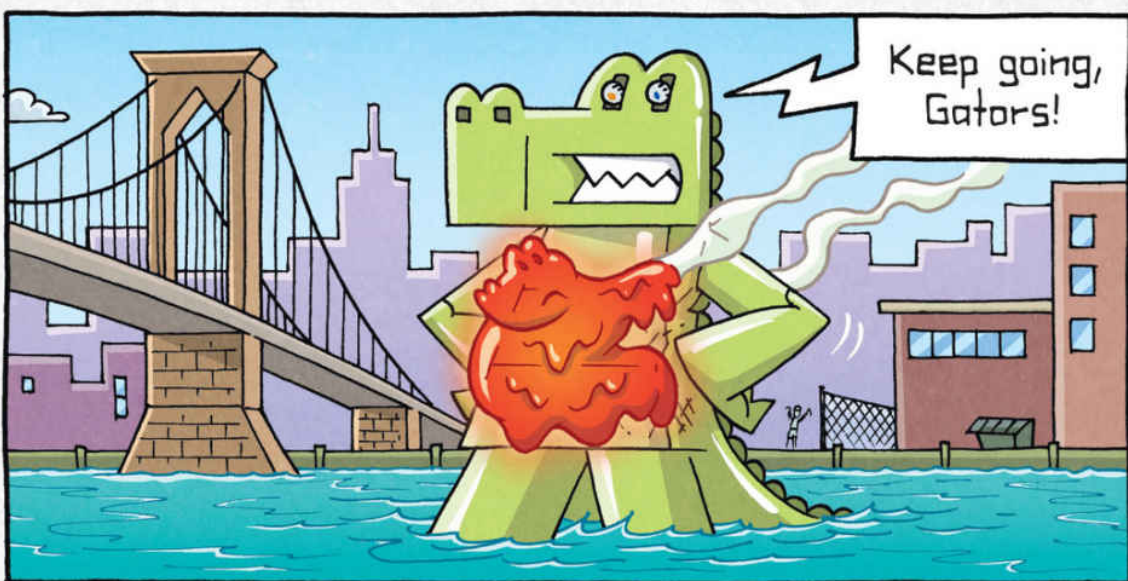
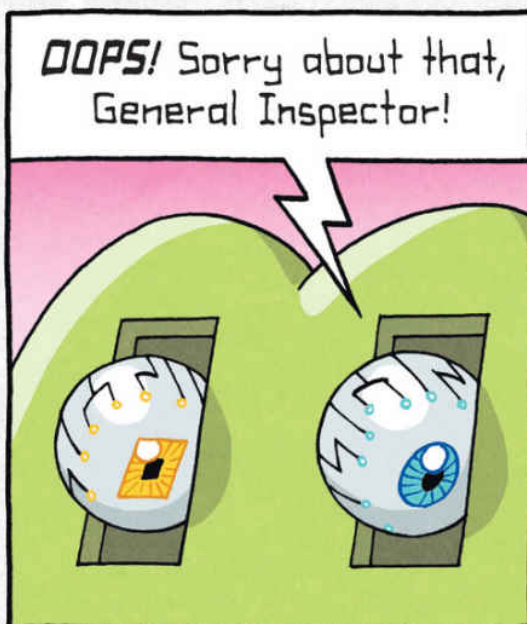
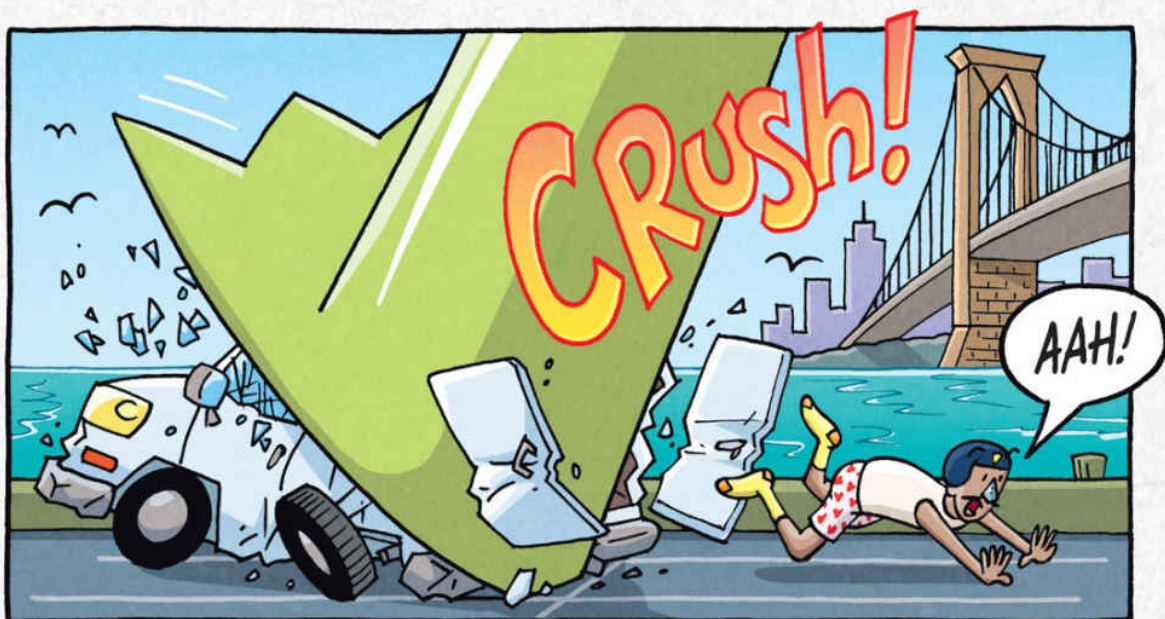


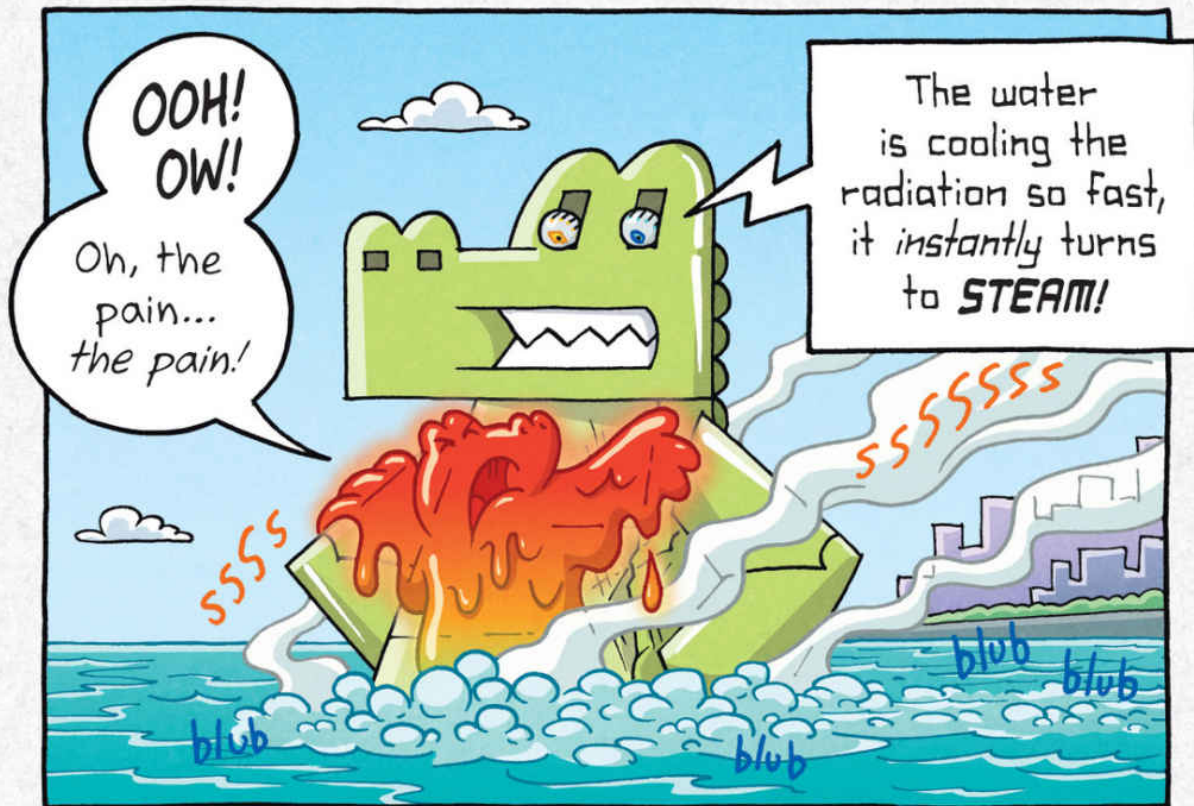




Chapter 19



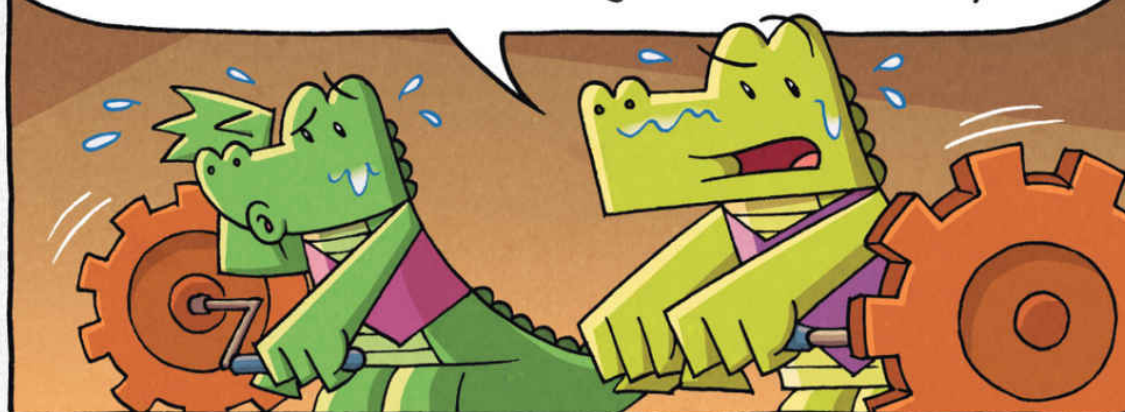




It's working, agents! Radioactidile is being **evaporated**!

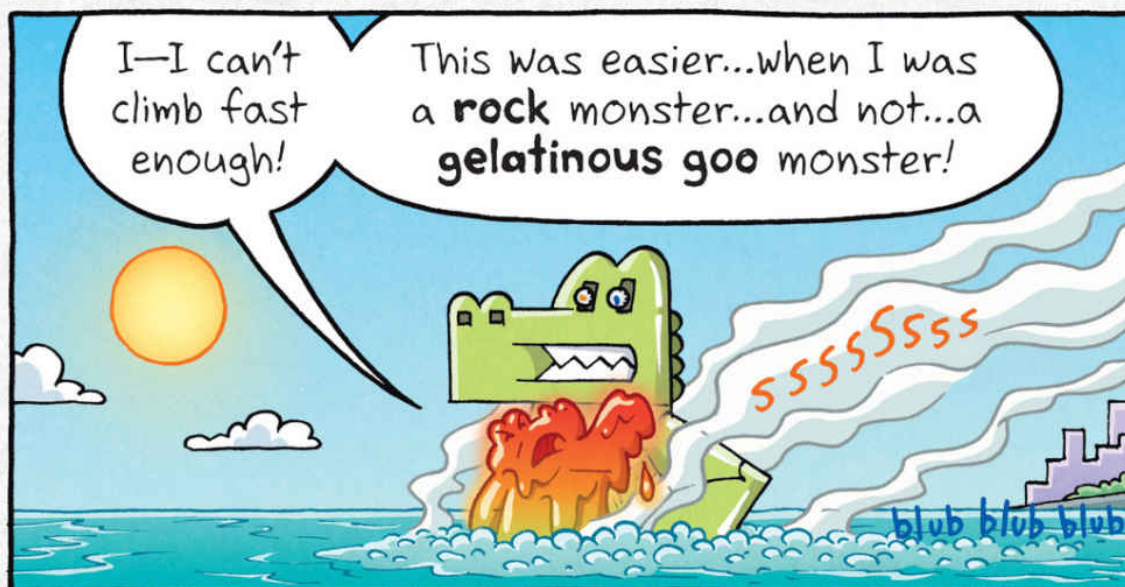


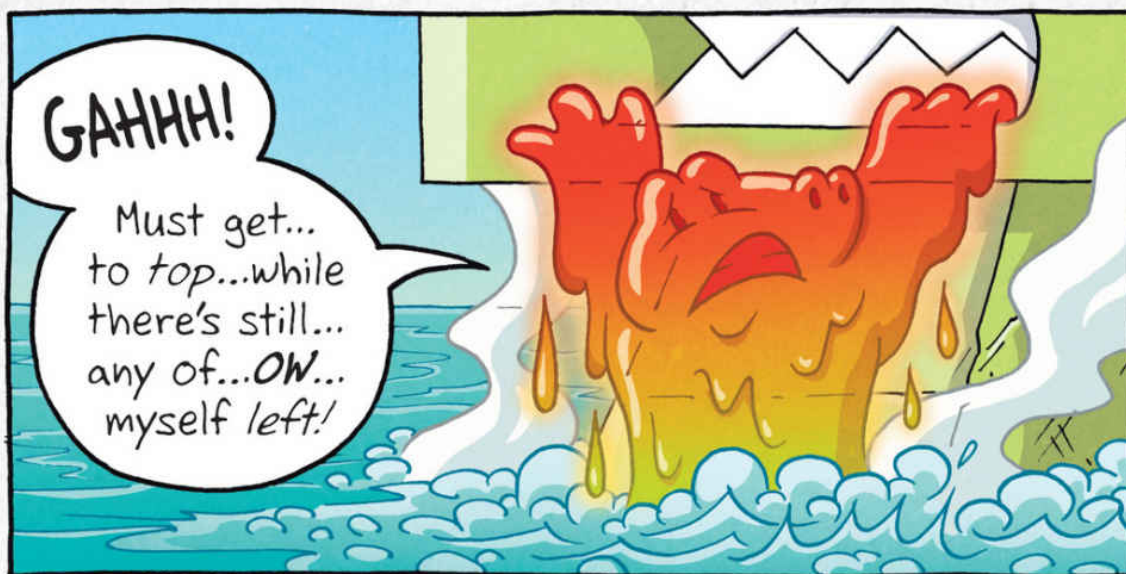
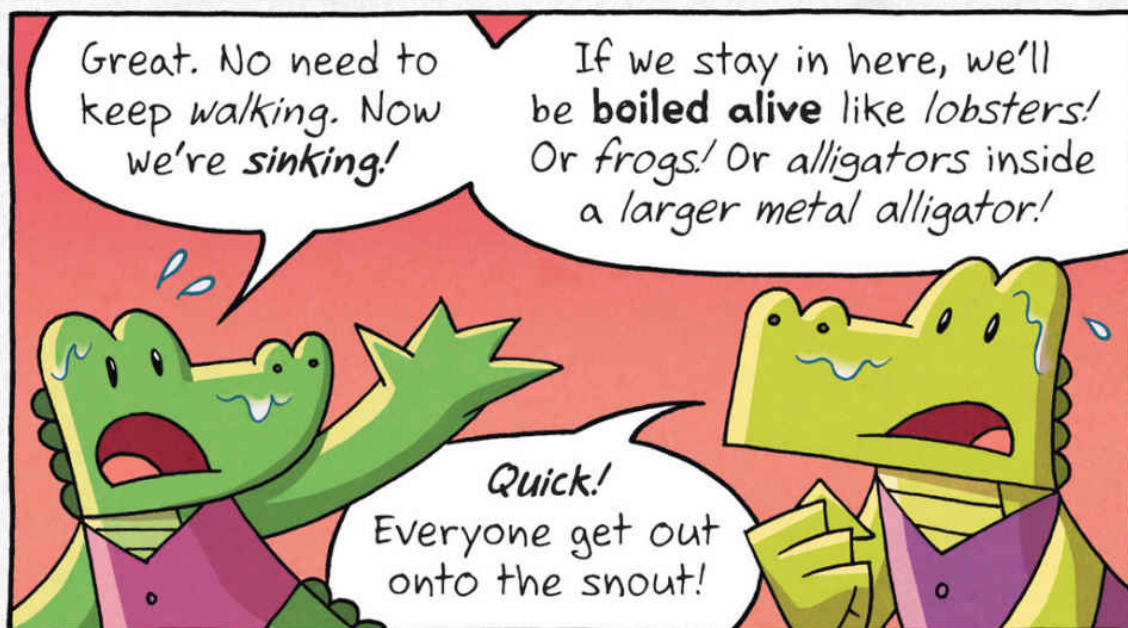
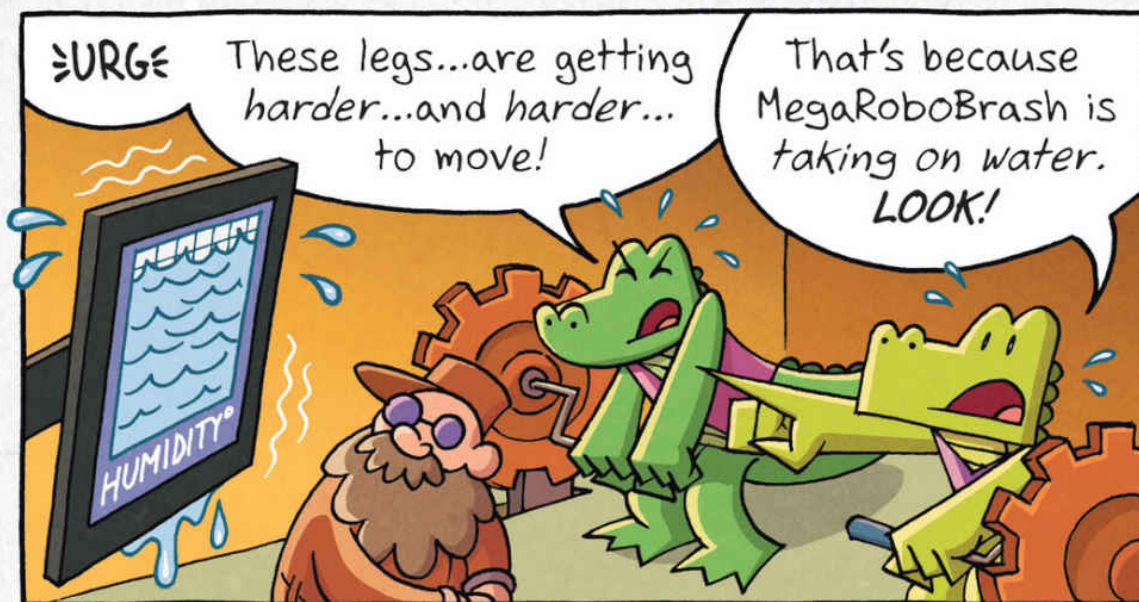
Just keep cranking, Mango! The farther we get from shore, the deeper the water will be, which means the more of Radioactidile will get *turned into vapor*!



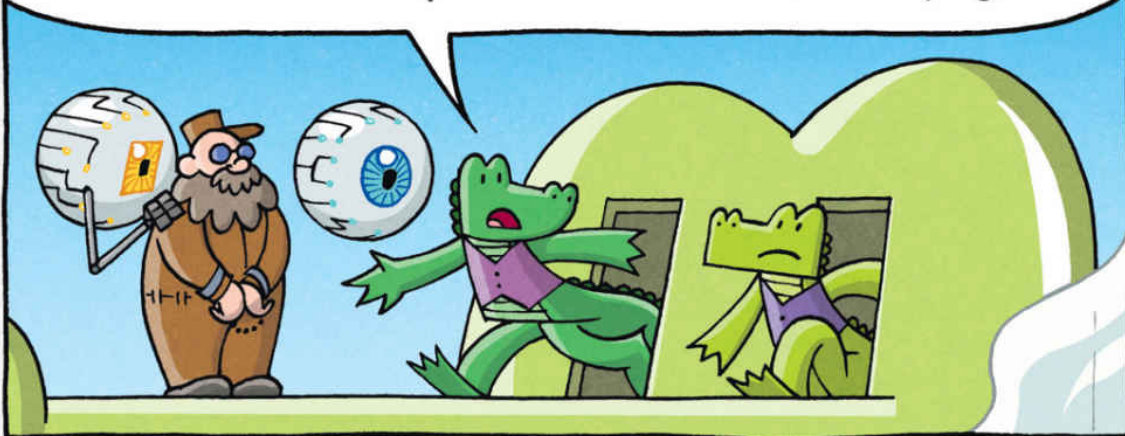
I—I can't climb fast enough!

This was easier...when I was a **rock** monster...and not...a **gelatinous goo** monster!





What now? With the water boiling, we can't swim away.
We'd need an escape boat to save this scapegoat!



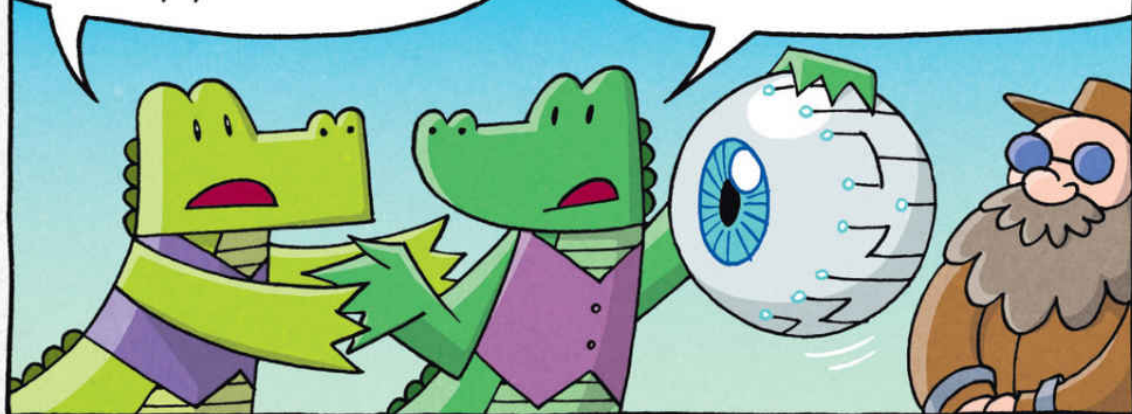
And any second now, Radioactidile is gonna get us!



I'm—**ARGH!**—gonna—**YEOWCH!**—get you...in a sec!

Get on top of C-ORB
and D-ORB! They can
carry you to shore.

Good idea, Brash—but
wait! There's not enough
room for **THREE** of us!



Forget about me, Mango! You've got to take Saul so that you can put **Red Mobster** away!

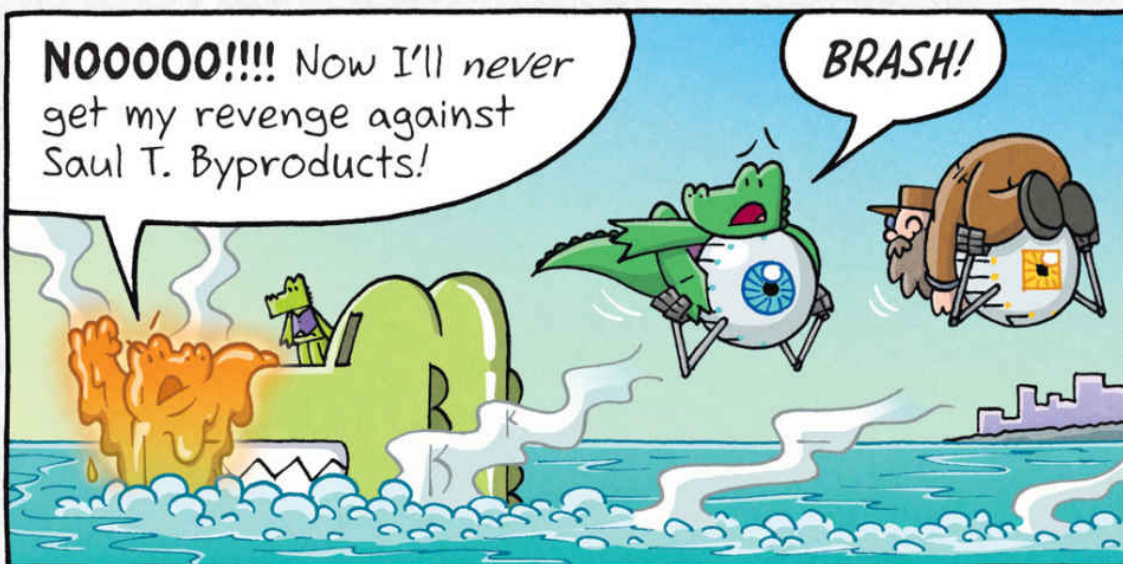


I—I'll send C-ORB back for you!



It's too far, and I'm sinking too fast for you to make it back in time. Save yourself! **GO!**

NOOOOO!!!! Now I'll never get my revenge against Saul T. Byproducts!



Sorry, Daryl, you'll just have to settle for revenge against **ME**. Isn't that what you always wanted?



WANTED? This...this isn't what I wanted. I...I just wanted to be UNDERSTOOD...and not FORGOTTEN... But this **toxic radiation** made me so **ANGRY!!!**



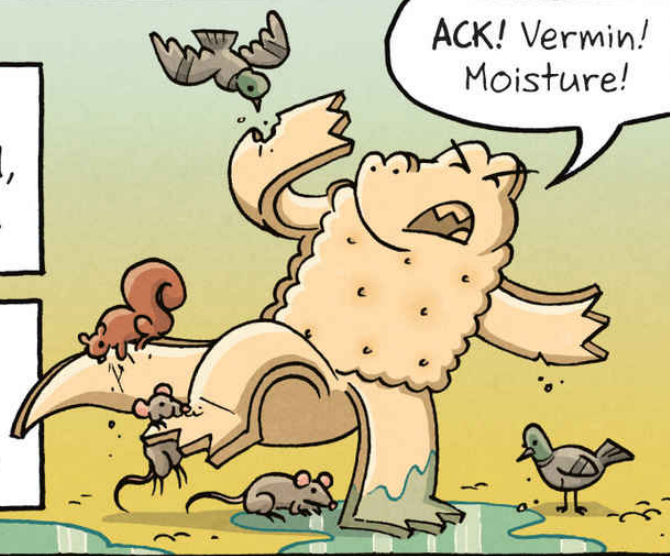
At first, I was **ANGRY** you didn't check to see if I survived that cracker factory accident...

Um, Brash? It's me, Daryl. Still alive... Just a **cracker**, apparently.



I had no idea how much time had passed, or even where I was.

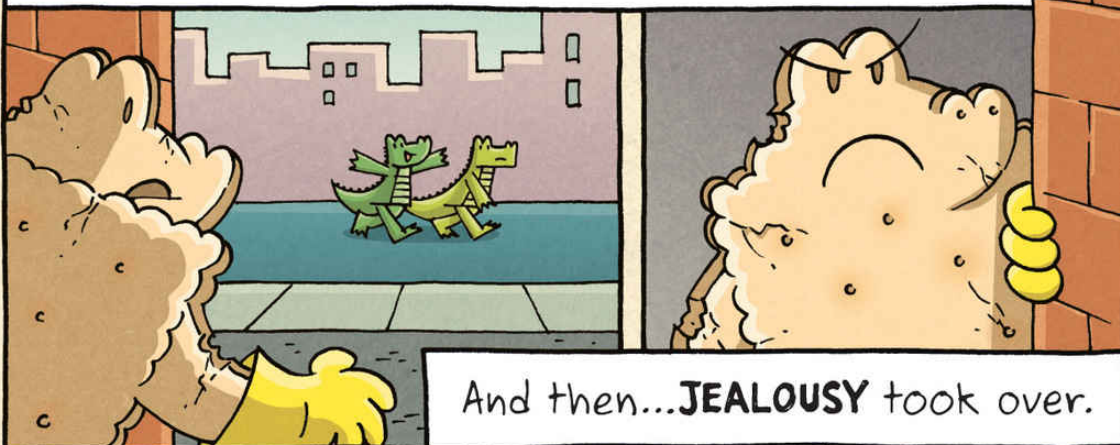
I soon learned that I had to adapt to being a **Crackerdile**.



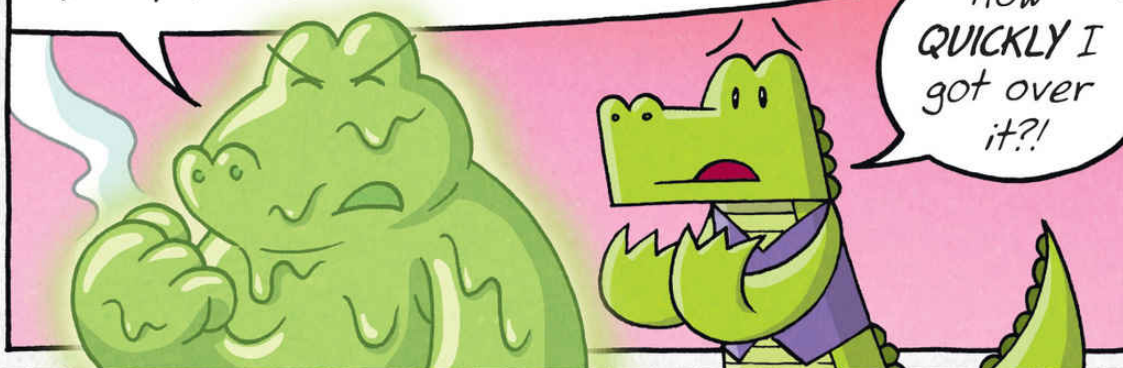
When I, a former **crocodile**, couldn't simply flush myself down a toilet to return to S.U.I.T., I felt as if I'd lost my entire identity...



On the long, long walk back to the city from wherever that delivery truck left me, my anger subsided...until I saw *you* with a **NEW** partner.



I...I didn't mean to become a **supervillain**. But my life—and my crumby body—were crumbling all around me! And I became filled with **RAGE**. So I blamed **YOU** for what happened to me when I saw how quickly you got over it.

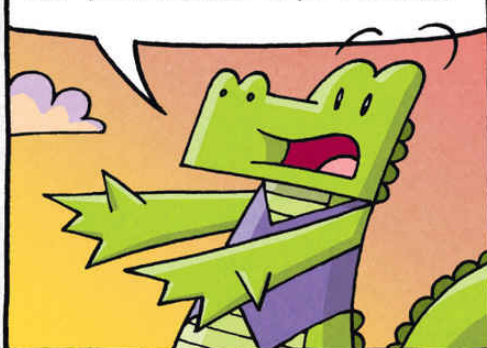


How **QUICKLY** I got over it?!

I **NEVER** got over it! Have you read **ANY** of these books? I'm a mess! And now I'm losing you for the fourth or fifth time... I'VE HONESTLY LOST COUNT!



We can't keep going on like this, Daryl! What could you even turn into after **THIS**? IT BOGGLES THE MIND!!!



You...You're right, Brash. This **TOXIC WASTE** inside me kept me alive, but also kept me from seeing the truth...



I've been wrong all along. I only wish...I'd realized it before **dooming** us both. I am so sorry, Brash. Can you ever... forgive me?



I forgive you, Daryl. And I've forgiven myself for what happened, too. I'm ready to accept my fate. I hope you're ready to accept yours.

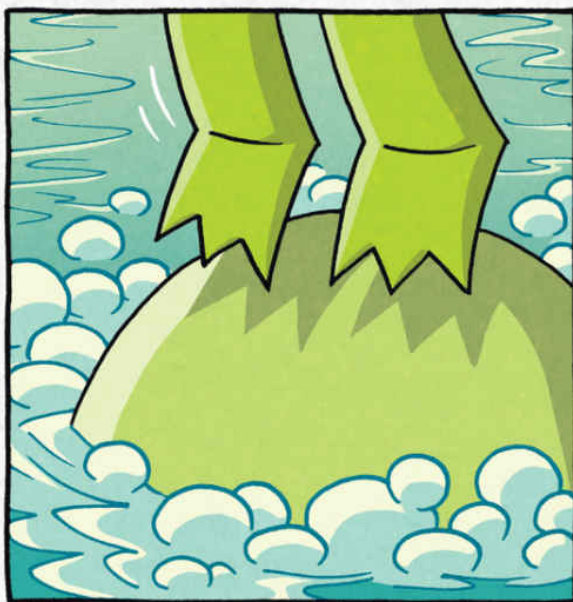
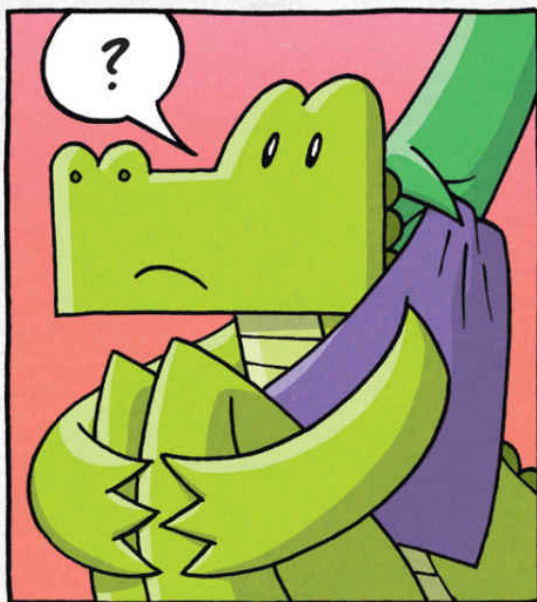
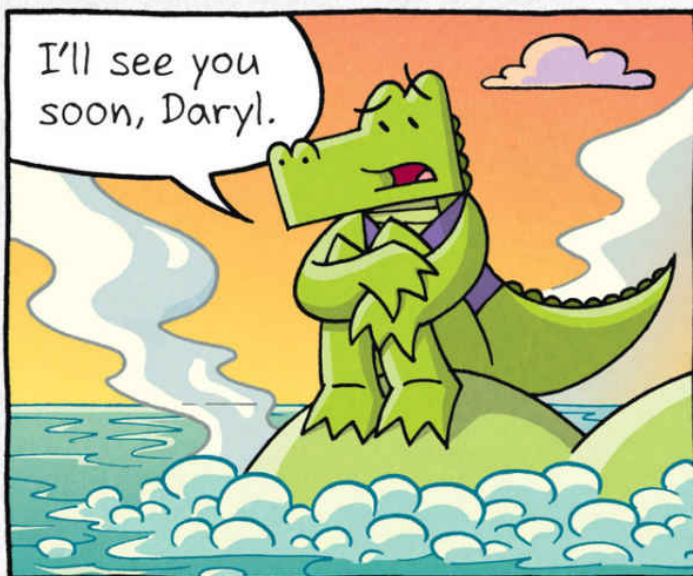
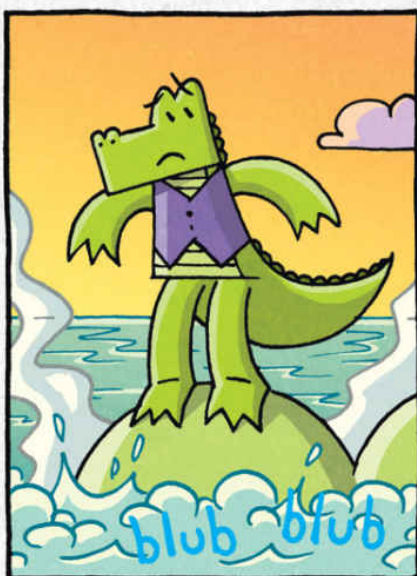
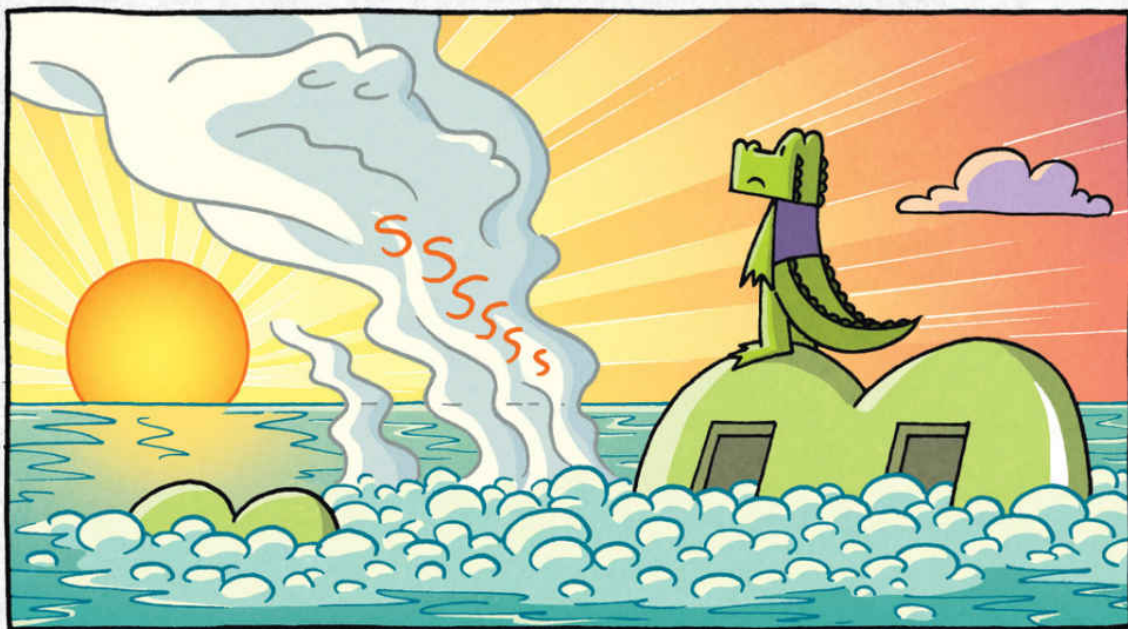


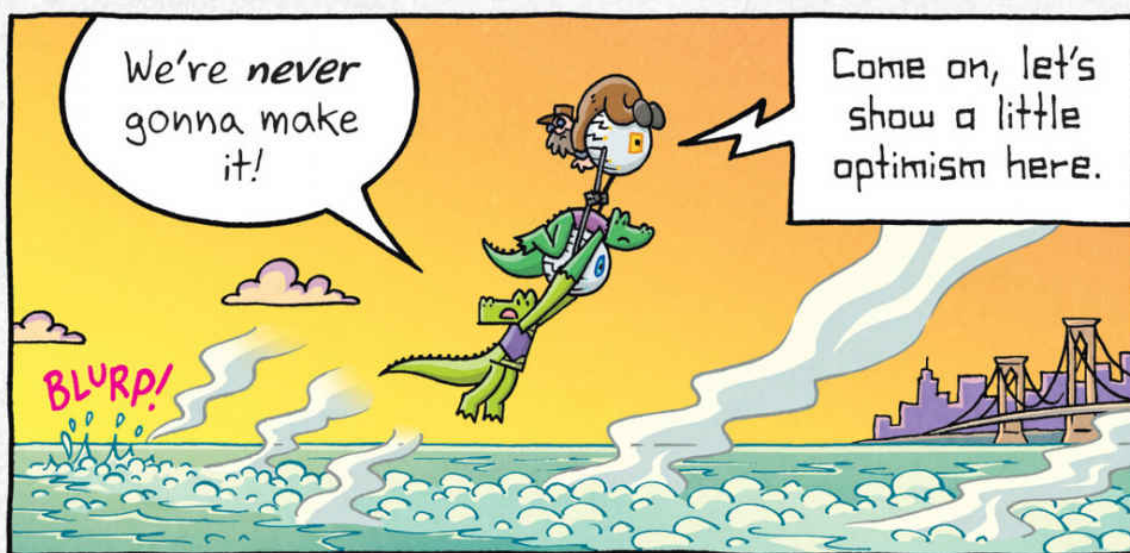
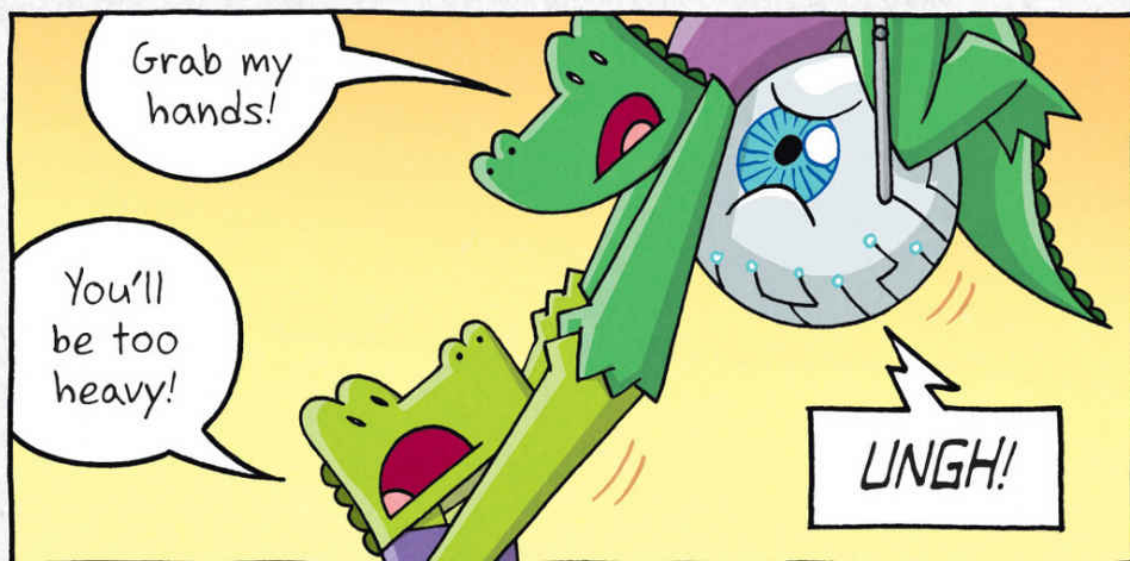
I am glad you are here with me. *OW!* Here at the end of all things, Brash.

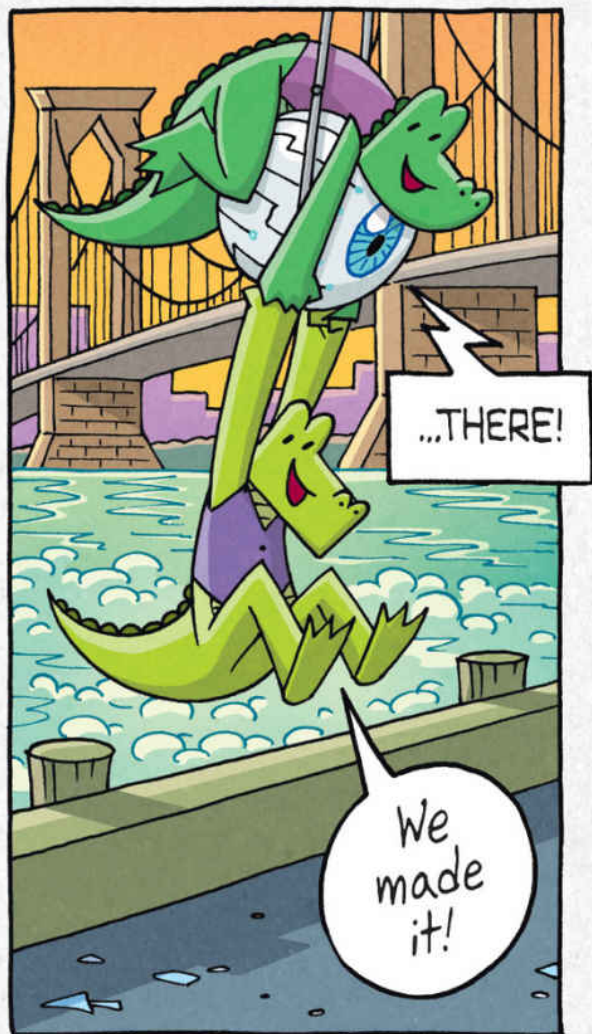


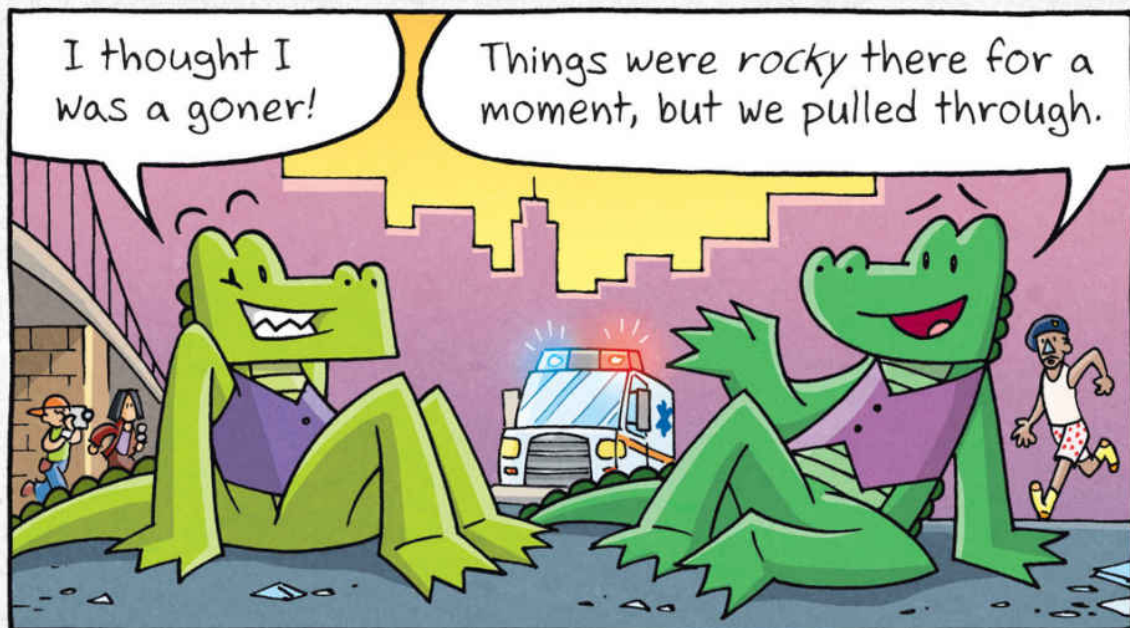
You are, and always have been, my friend.











Epilogue

That was the scene not long ago when the city's savior and protector, the **InvestiGator**, marched into the ocean, never to be seen again.



A sad day for all the fish that boiled in the process. But a *GREAT* day for the fish market!

Mmm, precooked!



Speaking of catch of the day, the crooked crustacean **RED MOBSTER** is finally behind bars!



Red's capture was in part thanks to the testimony of *THIS* man: **Saul T. Byproducts!** The former saltine baker confessed to taking out the mob's trash and covering up Red's most *TOXIC* crimes.



Now, having turned state's witness, Saul is serving out his own criminal sentence: *collecting* trash!



In old news, **Anjie's Antiques** is back with *NEW* Boulder Buddies! Turns out they're just the *OLD* Boulder Buddies with smiley faces drawn on them.

They don't glow anymore, but look how happy they are! Doesn't anyone want one?

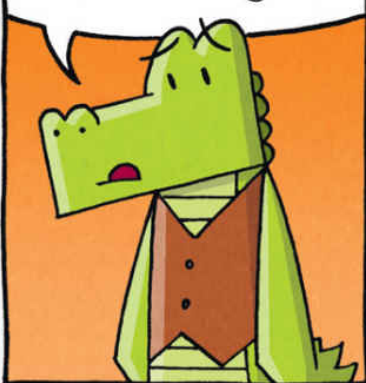
\$10? \$5? *A QUARTER???*



I guess everything that made Daryl who he was, was in that radioactive goo that evaporated away.



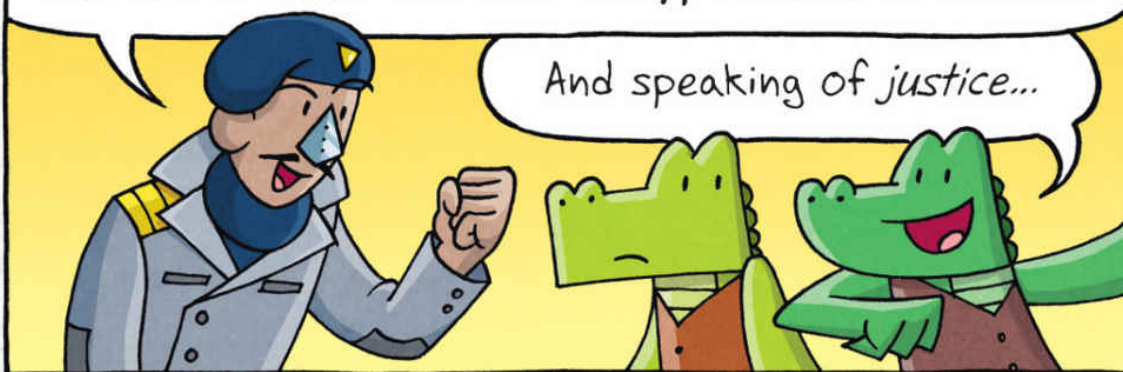
Daryl is gone forever. Again.

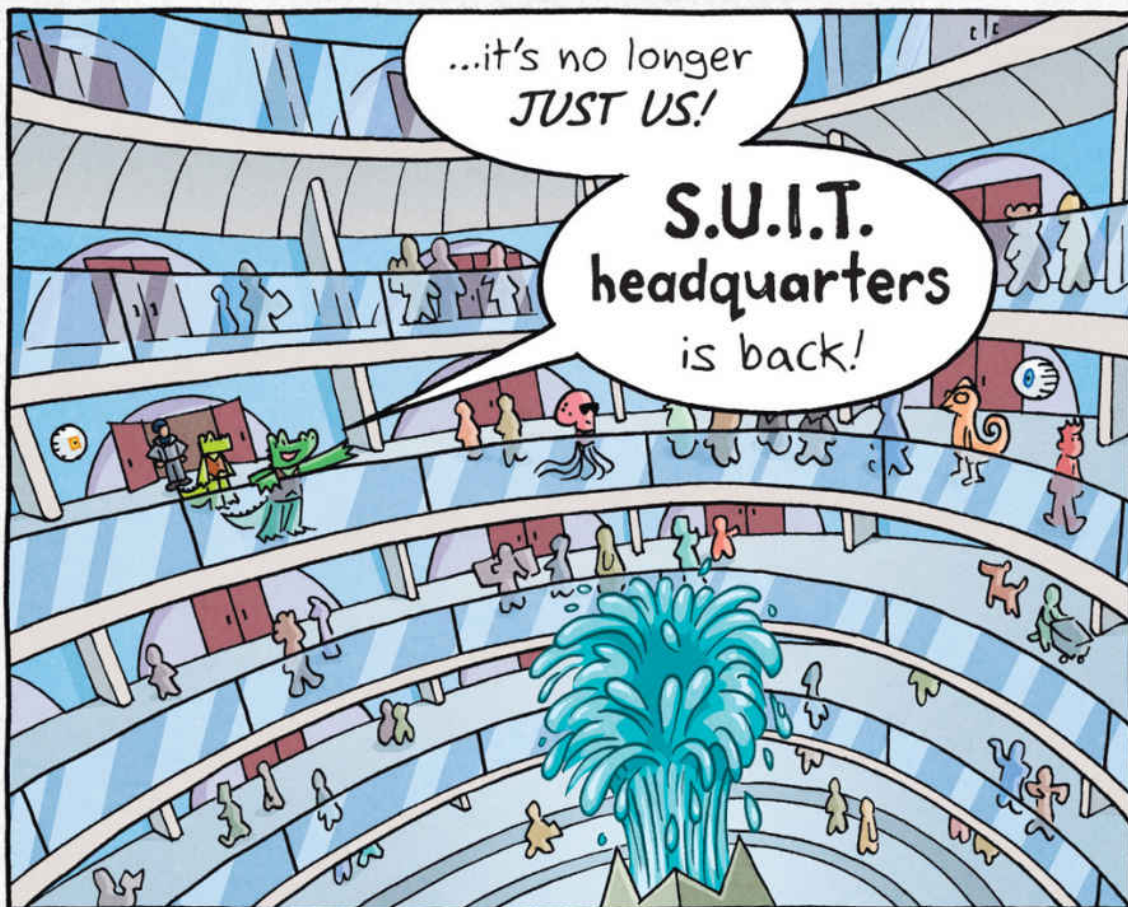


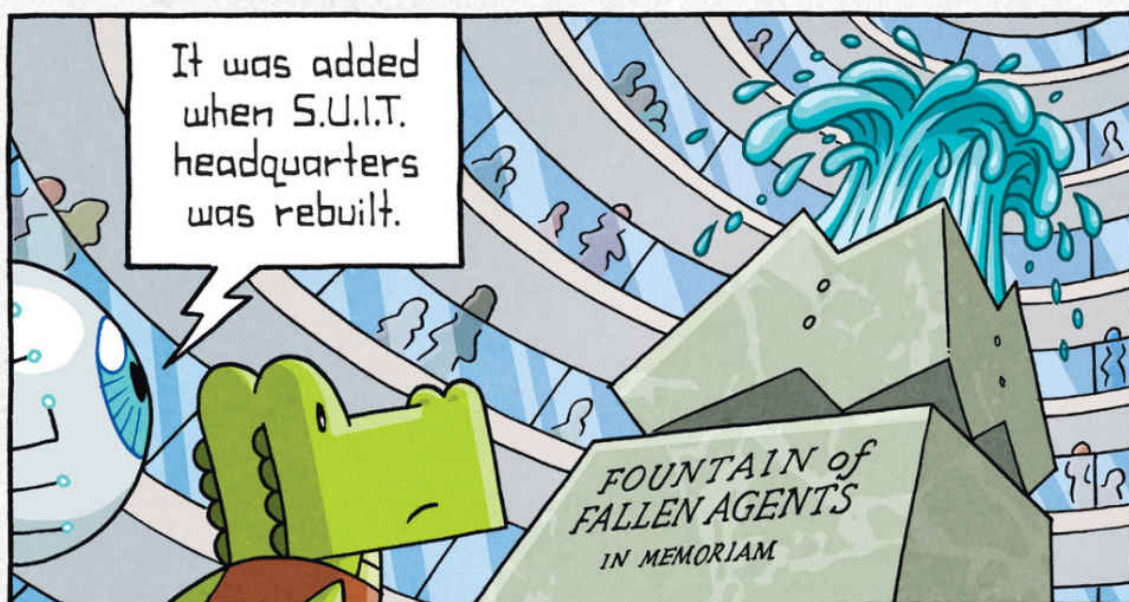
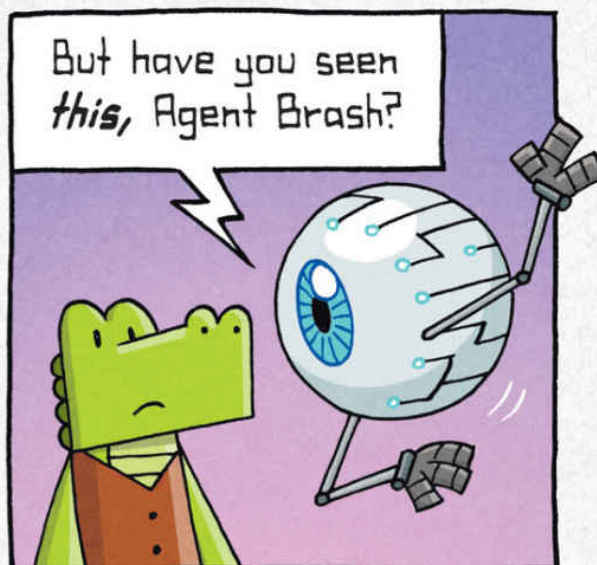
I know I've said this before, but the city is safe thanks to both of you, **InvestiGators**.



And now that **MegaRoboBrash** no longer looms over the skyline to be recognized from miles away, Brash can *confidently* go undercover to bring *MORE* villains like **Red Mobster** and **Saul T. Byproducts** to *JUSTICE*.

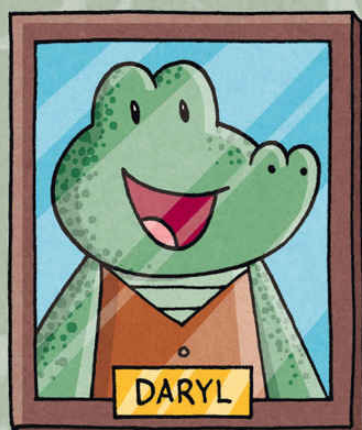








IN MEMORIAM



No one's ever really gone, Mango.

So long as we remember them, Brash.



And whether delivering laundry, solving mysteries, or fighting crime, **NO MATTER WHAT**, the world will always need the **InvestiGators!**



THE END!

Oh, hello there! We'd all been so busy with rebuilding S.U.I.T. headquarters, that the next **InvestiGators** adventure is still under construction.

But be patient...
MANGO and BRASH
will return!



I can't wait!
What'll I do for
FUN until then?

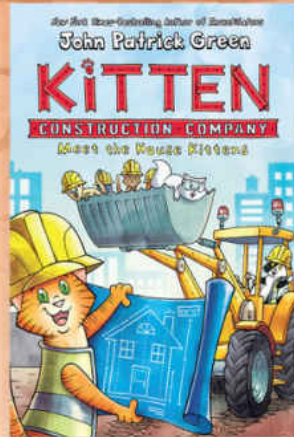
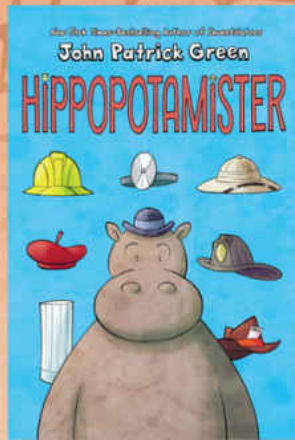
Looking for something
to do, Dr. Doodledoo?

There's plenty to keep
you entertained at

InvestiGatorsBooks.com

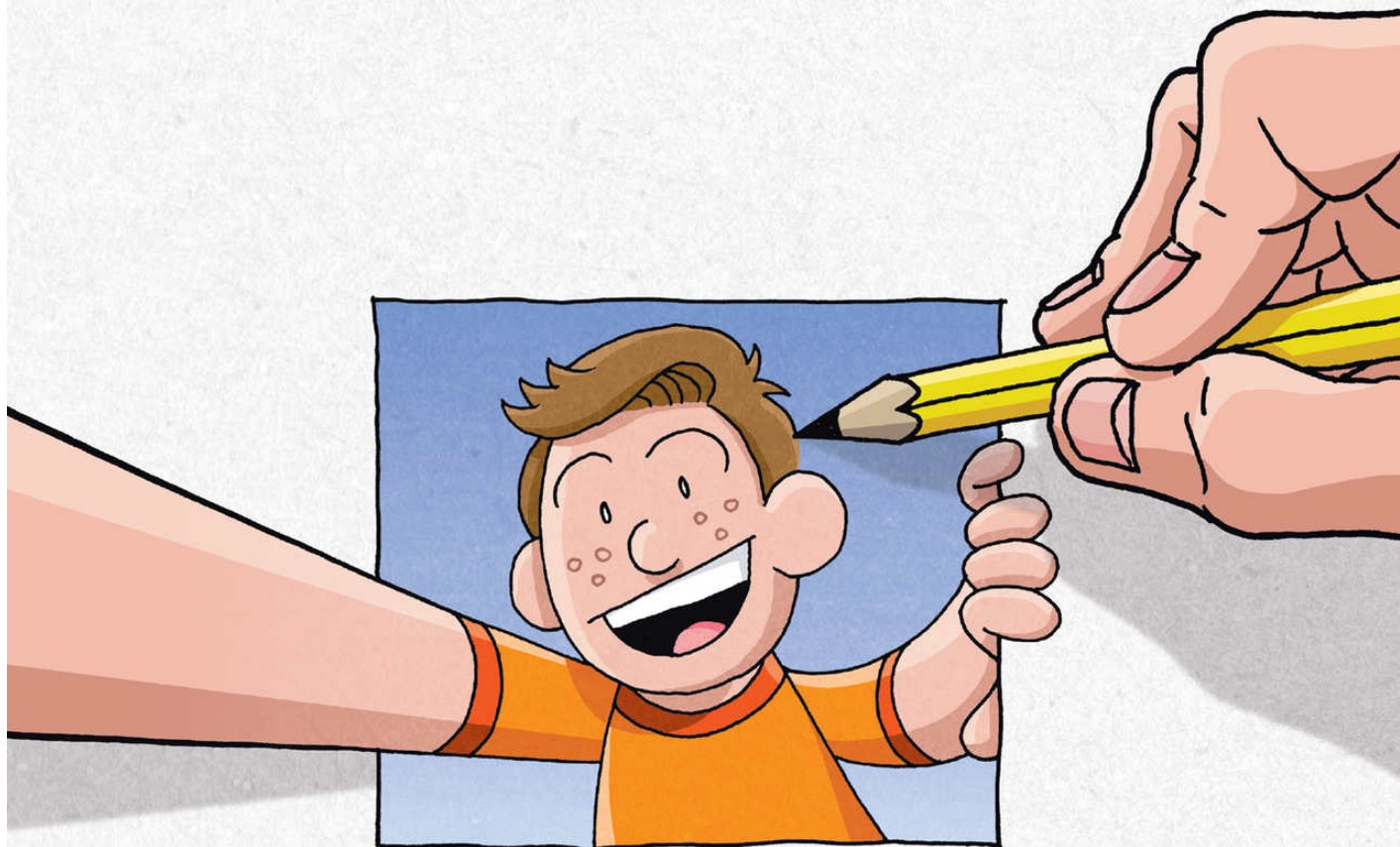
- Case Files
- Character Bios
- Puzzles & Games
- Art Activities
- Videos & Music
- and MORE!

Read the John Patrick Green Collection!



:01

First Second
firstsecondbooks.com



Investi GATORS

Braver and Boulder



written and illustrated by
John Patrick Green

with color by Wes Dzioba

:01

First Second
New York

Praise for InvestiGators

"A sugar rush manifested as a graphic novel."

—Kirkus Reviews

Things are **BUSINESS** as usual for the InvestiGators ...

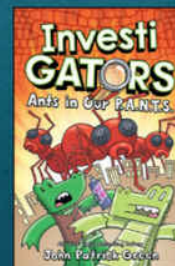


... until they're caught between **ROCKS** and a hard place!



Will Mango and Brash defeat their most **STONE**-cold nemesis yet?

**ROCK OUT
WITH THE
WHOLE SERIES!**



Cover art © 2022 by John Patrick Green

Cover design by John Patrick Green and Molly Johanson

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First Second
New York